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BYZANTIUM  
AND THE  
ARABS IN  
THE SIXTH  
CENTURY

VOLUME I | PART I

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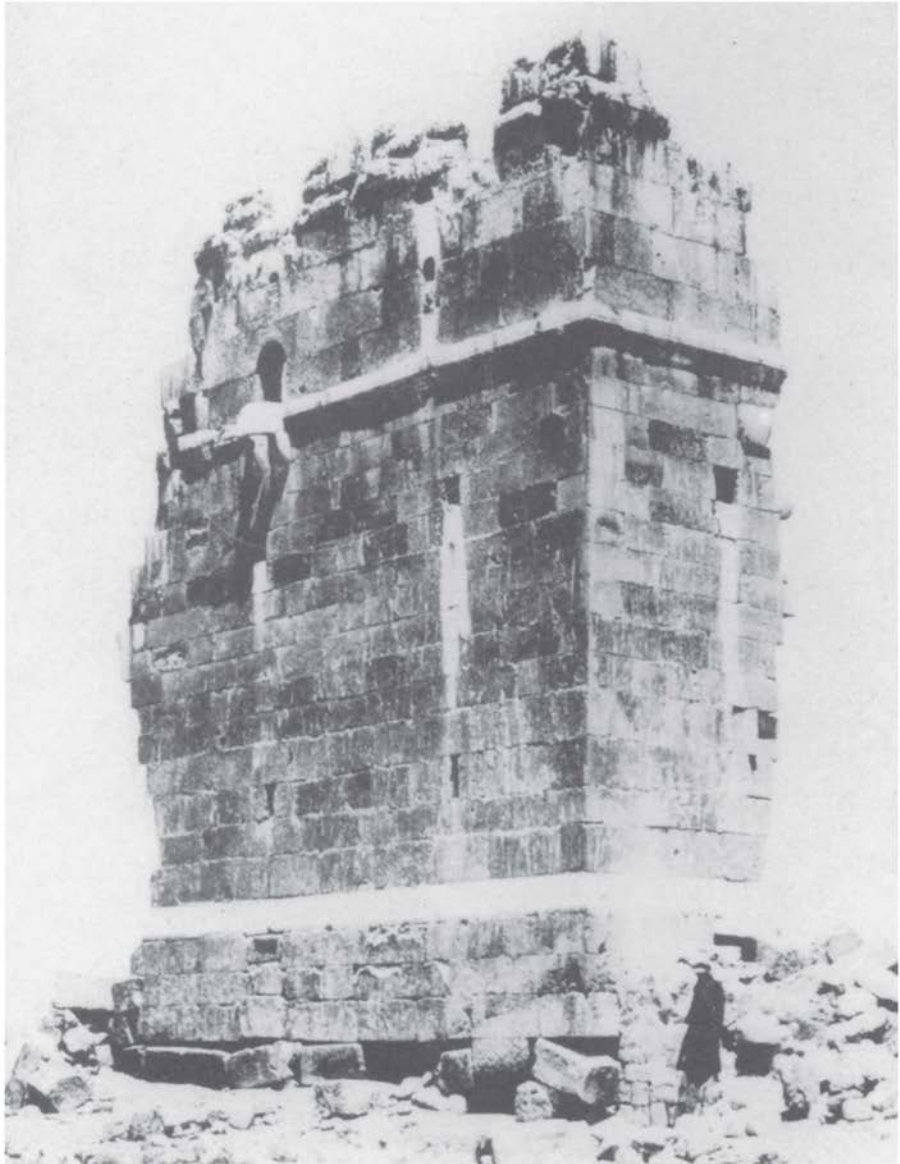
IRFAN SHAHÎD

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SIXTH CENTURY



The tower of the Ghassānid king Arethas, son of Jabala, at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Syria (photo: courtesy Dr. François Villeneuve, Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient, Damascus).

BYZANTIUM AND THE ARABS  
IN THE  
SIXTH CENTURY

IRFAN SHAHÎD

Volume I

Part 1: Political and Military History

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## Abbreviations

AB:	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
ActaSS:	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
BAFIC:	Shahîd, <i>Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century</i>
BAFOC:	Shahîd, <i>Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century</i>
BAR:	British Archaeological Reports
BASIC:	Shahîd, <i>Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century</i>
BASOR:	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i> (Jerusalem)
BSOAS:	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
BZ:	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
CCSL:	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CFHB:	Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
CSCO:	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
DACL:	<i>Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie</i>
DHGE:	<i>Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques</i>
DLH:	Rothstein, <i>Die Dynastie der Labmiden in al-Hîra</i>
DOP:	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
DOS:	Dumbarton Oaks Studies
DOT:	Dumbarton Oaks Texts
EI:	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
FHG:	<i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i>
GAL:	Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der arabischen Literatur</i>
GAS:	Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i>
GCAL:	G. Graf, <i>Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur</i>
GCSL:	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
GF:	Nöldeke, <i>Die Ghassânischen Fürsten</i>
HBE:	Stein, <i>Histoire du Bas-Empire</i>
HE:	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
HLRE:	Bury, <i>History of the Later Roman Empire</i>
HMH:	Rosenthal, <i>A History of Muslim Historiography</i>



- IGLSYR: Jalabert-Mouterde, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*
- IJMES: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
- JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
- JNES: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
- JRS: *Journal of Roman Studies*
- JSS: *Journal of Semitic Studies*
- LRE: A. H. M. Jones, *Later Roman Empire*
- MDAIK: *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo*
- MGH, AA: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*
- OC: *Oriens Christianus*
- ODB: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*
- PA: Devresse, *Le Patriarcat d'Antioche*
- PAS: Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*
- PG: J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca*
- PLRE: A. H. M. Jones, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*
- PO: *Patrologia Orientalis*
- PPUAES: *Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expedition to Syria*
- RA: Shahîd, *Rome and the Arabs*
- RB: *Revue Biblique*
- RE: *Paulys Realencyclopädie*, new rev. ed.
- RM: Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte*
- ROC: *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*
- SC: *Sources chrétiennes*
- TE: M. Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*
- TM: *Travaux et mémoires*
- TU: *Texte und Untersuchungen*
- ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*
- ZDPV: *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
- ZPE: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

## Preface

This is the third volume of the series that treats the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the proto-Byzantine period from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius. It concludes the middle part of a trilogy, the climax of which is the third, namely, *Byzantium and Islam in the Seventh Century* (*BISC*), which deals with the period that witnessed the rise of Islam and the Arab conquests.<sup>1</sup> The three volumes of the proto-Byzantine period—*BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC*—have an independent existence as a contribution toward understanding the Arab constituent in the makeup of late antiquity in the Near East, but they also serve as prolegomena to the final part of this trilogy. The century that the present volume treats is the crucial one in the proto-Byzantine period since it represents the transition from late antiquity<sup>2</sup> to the early Middle Ages.

### I

In view of the relative abundance of the material for writing the history of this century, *BASIC* will appear in two parts: *BASIC I* deals with political, military, and ecclesiastical history; and *BASIC II* will deal with cultural history, relations with western Arabia, with the tribes of the Outer Shield, and with frontier studies.

The present volume discusses the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the reigns of the six emperors of the sixth century: Anastasius, Justin I, Justinian, Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice. The treatment has been extended to include those of Phocas and Heraclius, since these two reigns belong to the same genuine historical era—the last phase of the proto-Byzantine period, terminated by the Islamic Conquests.

*BASIC I* deals almost exclusively with the *foederati* in the history of Byzantine Oriens. These are principally the Ghassānids who dominate Arab-Byzantine relations during the period. The history of the Arab *foederati* in this

<sup>1</sup> For this trilogy, see the present writer in *Rome and the Arabs* (*RA*), ix–xii, and *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (*BAFOC*), xv–xvi.

<sup>2</sup> For the most recent and authoritative work on late antiquity, see A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike*, *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, III.6 (Munich, 1989).

century is better documented than those of the fourth and fifth. Hence there are more data for writing the history of the Arab-Byzantine relationship during the reign of each emperor, and one may trace the strands of continuity running through each reign. Ghassānid figures appear as large historical personalities and no longer shadowy ones as in the fifth century.

In view of the aridity of the sources for the history of the *foederati* in general, the relative abundance of the data for this century is a gift to the student of the Arab-Byzantine relationship. Hence copious quotations have been made from these sources, and they have been gathered together in this single volume for the first time as a convenience to the student of this period. Often these sources are quoted *in extenso*, which enables the sources to speak for themselves. At times the same passages provide data for both political and ecclesiastical history, and therefore appear in both contexts in this volume, where their specific relevance is discussed. Some statements, which may seem repetitious, are included in order to serve various functions in different contexts.

The sources are mainly Greek and Latin, overwhelmingly Greek for the political and military history, while Syriac assumes greater importance for the ecclesiastical. Quotations from these sources are presented in modern European languages for the convenience of the reader unfamiliar with classical languages. However, whenever necessary, passages are quoted in the original languages for intensive analysis which can be done only when the original Greek, Latin, and Syriac texts are before the reader.

## II

If the fifth century was *terra incognita* for Byzantino-Arabists before *BAFIC* was written, the sixth has not been so. In 1889 Theodor Nöldeke's brilliant monograph on the Ghassānids appeared and opened a new chapter in the historiography of the dynasty.<sup>3</sup> The monograph established its correct chronology and the sequence of its rulers in the sixth century. This was Nöldeke's main concern in writing this monograph, which thus is a series of notes and footnotes on the dynasty rather than a history of it, let alone a history of Arab-Byzantine relations in this century. It has, however, dominated the writings of all who have dealt with the Ghassānids, including the present writer, who have been truly in the debt of this distinguished German scholar.

Since the publication of Nöldeke's *Ghassānischen Fürsten* new sources have been published, especially Greek and Syriac, and advances have been made in research on the sixth century and the whole of the proto-Byzantine period,

<sup>3</sup> *Die Ghassānischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's* (Berlin, 1889) (= *GF*).

which are essential for understanding the Arab-Byzantine relationship. This has resulted in drastic and substantial revision of Nöldeke's perception of the Ghassānid dynasty, which has influenced the writings of all those who came after him. The series of these revisions will become clear in the course of this volume, but two of them should be mentioned here: the explosion of the myth that the Ghassānids were nomads, and the emergence of the Ghassānids as zealous Monophysites who wrote an important chapter in the history of that Christian confession in the sixth century. The ecclesiastical role of the Ghassānids is fully discussed and documented in *BASIC I*, while their role as a sedentary community is only partially treated. The latter receives a fuller treatment in *BASIC II*, where their contribution to the urbanization of the limitrophe<sup>4</sup> is discussed at length.

Since 1889 no work has appeared that was specifically devoted to the Ghassānids or the Arab-Byzantine relationship. The Ghassānids received some attention, mostly in the inter-war period, in the works of ecclesiastical historians who wrote on *Oriens Christianus*, such as F. Nau.<sup>5</sup> One of these works, A. Aigrain's monumental article, "Arabie,"<sup>6</sup> was a *tour de force* but nevertheless was written from the perspective of a Christian ecclesiastical historian who was writing on the Arabs in general, and not on the Ghassānids in particular. Hence it has all the limitations of a work conceived and executed within that framework.

The present work is therefore the first study devoted to the Ghassānids since Nöldeke's monograph. It builds upon Nöldeke, who approached the Ghassānids as a philologist, but treats them differently. It presents a history of the Ghassānids as *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century and sets them within the mainstream of Byzantine history in this crucial century. It thus forms a climax to the present writer's early work, a series of articles on the Ghassānids and other aspects of the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the sixth century. These studies have been collected in a volume<sup>7</sup> which thus forms a companion to *BASIC I* and is indispensable for its readers. As these early articles have appeared in the *Variorum* series, they have not been included

<sup>4</sup> The belt or strip of borderland along the *limes orientalis* where the Ghassānids settled; at the apogee of their power it extended from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat. This hybrid (*limes*—*τρόφος*) is attested in the Latin of this proto-Byzantine period to which the Ghassānids belonged. Although technically not *limitanei*, the Ghassānids were in fact such, and one of their most important assignments was the defense of the *limes* along which they were encamped. It is the most convenient term to use for the Ghassānid land in *Oriens*. The oriental limitrophe and its Ghassānid structures will receive full treatment in *BASIC II*.

<sup>5</sup> See *Les arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VIIe au VIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1933).

<sup>6</sup> See *DHGE*, III, cols. 1158–1339 (Paris, 1924).

<sup>7</sup> See *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the Rise of Islam*, *Variorum Collected Studies* (London, 1988).

here. Instead they are simply referred to, with the exception of a few pages that appear in the present volume because they are essential to the argument in which they occur.

As careful readers of the volumes of this series will have noted, the Arabs are not treated as such, but as *foederati* of Byzantium strictly within the framework of Byzantine history in Oriens in the sixth century. Thus the Byzantinist, and not only the Byzantino-Arabist, will find here discussions of problems that bear on his or her interests as a Byzantinist. Many passages pertaining to the Arabs in the Greek and Latin historians are intensively analyzed for the first time, thus shedding light on many aspects of Byzantine history and historiography.

The technical *Latin* designation of the Arab allies of Byzantium in this proto-Byzantine period was *foederati* (Greek ἑσπενδοί or σύμμαχοι). This was the term applied to those of the fourth and the fifth centuries, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids respectively, and it is applicable to the Ghassānids of the sixth century as well. Procopius' well-known passage,<sup>8</sup> when carefully examined, suggests not the discontinuance of the application of the term in the reign of Justinian but rather its capaciousness that now included other categories of troops, such as the private bands of soldiers led by *condottieri*. The Arab allies of Byzantium in the sixth century, the Ghassānids, are thus referred to as *foederati* in this volume, and they were truly such. The *foedus* was and remained the instrument of policy that regulated Rome's relationship with them as with all foreign allies, and they continued to receive the *annona foederatica* and remained non-citizens to whom *civitas* was not extended.

The sixth century is better known than the fifth both to Byzantinists and to Byzantino-Arabists alike. Hence the chapters of this volume, organized around the reigns of the emperors, are not difficult to follow, especially as a short introduction in each chapter presents the main problems of each reign. These introductions do not make superfluous the writing of a synthesis that has been a feature of the two earlier volumes on the fourth and fifth centuries. This synthesis, however, will be included at the end of *BASIC II*, since only then, after discussing the cultural history of the Ghassānids and their role in the defense system of Byzantium in Oriens, can the significance of their history be fully grasped.

<sup>8</sup> *History*, III.xi.3-4. N. Adontz has written perceptively on the survival of the term during the reign of Justinian and the 6th century; see his *Armenia in the Period of Justinian*, trans. N. G. Garsoïan (Lisbon, 1970), 85-87. On the *foederati* and the σύμμαχοι, see R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte* (Berlin, 1920), 80-88, 280-83, 291-94.

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## Introduction

The context within which the three volumes on Byzantium and the Arabs in the proto-Byzantine period are written has been explained in the introduction to the first volume on the fourth century, *BAFOC*, in the section titled "Byzantium and the Arabs before the Rise of Islam," and the problems and themes of this period have also been discussed there in another section.<sup>1</sup> This introduction, therefore, consists of only two sections, one dealing with the sources and the other giving a synoptic view of the sixth century. Both sections will contribute to a better comprehension of the many chapters and detailed analyses that constitute this volume.

### I. THE SOURCES

What was said about the sources and their relative importance for *BAFOC* and *BAFIC* is also applicable to this volume. For *BASIC I*, the three major sets of sources are the Greek, Latin, and Syriac; the first two have made possible the writing of the political and military history of the period, while the third has made possible writing the part on ecclesiastical history.

A. The Greek sources may be divided into the following categories.

1. Literary sources: all the major historians and writers of the period have been drawn upon: Procopius, Malalas, Nonnosus, Agathias, Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact. Choricus of Gaza, too, has been very useful, and so has been the *Chronicon Paschale*. The later chronographers, Theophanes and Patriarch Nicephorus, have not been neglected.

2. Hagiography has been especially important: the *Vitae* of the various monks of Palestine in the work of Cyril of Scythopolis and the *Vita* of Simeon the Younger have illuminated basic aspects of Ghassānid history; much less important has been the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus.

3. *Novellae*: two of the novels of Justinian, the one on Arabia and the other on Palestine, together with the edict on Phoenicia Libanensis, have been very useful for understanding the phylarchal situation in these three provinces.

4. Epigraphy: unlike the fifth century in Arab-Byzantine relations, the

<sup>1</sup> See *BAFOC*, 8–25, essential here for a better comprehension of this volume.



sixth is well served by Greek epigraphy. A number of inscriptions on both Arethas and his son Mundir have been assembled, and they are especially welcome for obvious reasons.

B. The Latin sources are much less important than the Greek, but they have been drawn upon for some useful data: Marcellinus Comes, Corippus, John of Biclar, the letters of Pope Gregory, and Gregory of Tours.

C. The Syriac sources are mainly relevant to writing the ecclesiastical history<sup>2</sup> and are divisible into three categories.

1. Contemporary historians: three of them have been extensively drawn upon—Joshua the Stylite, Zacharia of Mytilene, and John of Ephesus. The last is by far the most important.

2. Later historians and chroniclers: in addition to the short chronicles, titled *Chronica Minora* in CSCO, there is the large figure of Michael the Syrian, and to a lesser degree Pseudo-Dionysius.

3. Contemporary documents: the letters of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām on the martyrs of Najrān, the *Documenta Monophysitarum*, and the letter of Peter of Callinicum.

These are the principal sets of sources that have been laid under contribution for *BASIC I*. The Arabic sources are the least important for this part but become crucial for *BASIC II*, which to a great extent is based on them. One Arabic source, however, is of immense importance for *BASIC I*, and it is the best of all sources, since it comes from epigraphy—the Usays inscription. It is the only Arabic inscription on the Ghassānids that has been discovered.<sup>3</sup>

These sources complement one another. The secular Greek historians are silent on the Arab religious affiliation to Christianity. This is revealed only in some Greek hagiographic works—Cyril of Scythopolis, the *Vita* of Simeon, and a Greek inscription that reveals the Ghassānid affiliation with Christianity—but their true and fundamental role in the fortunes of Christianity in the sixth century is revealed only in the Syriac authors. These sources for the sixth century are no longer those of the fragmentary classicizing historians on

<sup>2</sup> But they are often extremely important also for secular Ghassānid history, such as the victory of Chalcis over the Lakhmids in 554 and the restoration of the phylarchate in 587, both owed to Michael the Syrian.

<sup>3</sup> The many Arabic inscriptions commonly referred to as Safaitic are not my concern since I deal with the Ghassānids and other Arab groups in Oriens who qualify as *foederati*. For a recent treatment of these inscriptions, see D. Graf, "Rome and the Saracens: Reassessing the Nomadic Menace," in *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel* (Leiden, 1989), 357–80. The many inscriptions of Rhomaic Arabs are not my concern either; cf. T. Parker, review of *BAFIC*, *Speculum* 67 (1992), 483. For the few Christian authors who wrote in Arabic and who are referred to in the volume, see G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, I–II, *Studi e testi* 118, 133 (Vatican City, 1944), 19, and Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1968).

whose surviving fragments *BAFIC* was based. They are authors whose works have been preserved. Hence the problem in dealing with them is not that of "the encounter with the fragment"<sup>4</sup> but the *ira et studium* that are so much a part of their work.

All these sources have already been edited, commented upon, and evaluated.<sup>5</sup> My task here has been to isolate the *Arabica* in them—the passages on the Arabs and the *foederati*—subject these to an intensive examination, and give an evaluation of each of these historians in the light of this examination. The results shed new light on the historiography of these sixth-century authors, who have been recently studied by such scholars as Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys, Roger Scott, Brian Croke, Ann Moffatt, Averil Cameron, David Frendo, R. C. Blockley, Pauline Allen, and Michael and Mary Whitby.

## II. THE SIXTH CENTURY: A SYNOPTIC VIEW

### A

Unlike the fifth century, which witnessed a long peace between Persia and Byzantium, the sixth was a tumultuous century during which that peace was shattered in the first reign, that of Anastasius, and war with Persia continued to break out in the reign of each succeeding emperor. These continual wars in the East were accompanied by the outbreak of others with the Germanic peoples in the West, brought about by the Justinianic reconquest of the Roman Occident, and with the Slavs who invaded the Balkans in the latter part of the century. The empire was fighting on all fronts. However, the Persian wars in the East had special significance in the context of the long conflict with Sasanid Persia, especially as they culminated in the Persian war of Heraclius' reign, which was followed almost immediately by the war with Islam. This war decreed Byzantium out of Oriens, Egypt, and North Africa, and opened a

<sup>4</sup> For this, see *BAFIC*, xxv.

<sup>5</sup> For literature on these sources (Greek, Latin, and Syriac), see the relevant chapters in K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1897); G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Berlin, 1958); H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I (Munich, 1978); H. G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959); B. Altaner and A. Stuiber, *Patrologie* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna, 1978). For the Syriac sources, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922). Since Baumstark wrote, Sebastian Brock has been publishing his valuable Syriac bibliographies and reassessments of Syriac authors, e.g., "Syriac Historical Writing: A Survey of the Main Sources," *Journal of the Iraqi Academy Syriac Corporation* 5 (1979–80), 1–30, with reference to the works of other colleagues who labor in the field of Syriac studies, especially I. Ortiz de Urbina; idem, "Syriac Studies 1981–1985: A Classified Bibliography," *ibid.*, 14 (1987), 289–560.

For up-to-date and quick reference to the history of the 6th century, see the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan et al. (New York, 1991), 3 vols., and John Martindale's more detailed *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, III A and B (Cambridge, 1992).

truly new era in the history of Byzantium and the world. For many scholars, it signifies the end of late antiquity in the East and the beginning of the Middle Ages, thus making the Arab Conquests and the seventh century the true watershed between the two historical eras.<sup>6</sup>

There was also the ecclesiastical controversy that tore apart the Byzantine Orient. While the Arian heresy was definitively disposed of in the fourth century, and thus became a problem only in the Occident where it was embraced by many of the Germanic tribes; and while Nestorianism in the fifth was eliminated from Byzantine territory when the School of Edessa with its Nestorian bias was closed by Emperor Zeno in 489, Monophysitism remained a thorn in the side of Orthodox Byzantium, within Oriens, in Armenia, and in Egypt, that is, in most of the eastern provinces of the empire. In spite of sincere efforts on the part of Chalcedonian emperors to effect a reconciliation and attain the ideal of *una fides*, the Monophysites remained irreconcilable till the very end. The movement had many political and military implications, and this contributed from within to increased tension and instability in the East.

The emperor who was most involved in both the military conflicts and the theological controversies was Justinian, whose personality and achievements dominate the century, and thus the period may truly be called the century of Justinian,<sup>7</sup> as the fourth may be called the century of Constantine. His reign was the longest: for almost half a century, including the reign of his uncle Justin I, he was the effective ruler of the Byzantine state, actively pursuing his political, military, and ecclesiastical goals until his death in 565. It was in fact Justinian who changed the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in this period when he initiated a vigorous pro-Ghassānid policy.

## B

Set against the backdrop of such a century, the Arab *foederati* appear as active participants in the making of its history, both militarily and ecclesiastically. As the Persian war was fought continually in this century, the Ghassānids as *foederati* naturally appear regularly in the campaigns of the war and take part in important military engagements, such as the battle of Callicicum in 531. In addition, they conduct campaigns against their inveterate enemies, the Lakhmids, the allies of Sasanid Persia. After containing their thrusts against Oriens, they finally crush them in a decisive victory in Chalchic

<sup>6</sup> See A. Kazhdan and A. Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), 1–23.

<sup>7</sup> As it may be called "the century of Chosroes," viewed from the Persian perspective, both because of the importance of the reign and of its long duration, almost as long as that of Justinian.

in 554 and continue to thrash them in the 570s. Although technically not a part of the *exercitus comitatensis* of Oriens, they virtually functioned as such, galloping for Byzantium against the Persians and the Lakhmids and keeping watch on the oriental *limes*. The three volumes of the second part of this trilogy—*BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC*—especially the last, are the most detailed account of any federate group in the service of Byzantium in the Orient in this proto-Byzantine period. Their history is practically unknown to the general historians of this period or even to the specialized military histories of Byzantium.<sup>8</sup>

As Monophysites and zealous ones, they took an active part in the religious conflicts of the century. They turned out to be the mailed fist of the movement in Oriens. Their kings intervened on critical occasions to serve the interests of their confession. Around the year 540 the Ghassānid Arethas effected the ordination of two bishops, Jacob and Theodore, and with this the resuscitation and reestablishment of the Monophysite hierarchy after it had been decimated by persecution and executions. He continued to guard the interests of the Monophysite confession till the end of his long life and reign in 569, when he made his exit from history not as the redoubtable warrior, which he was, but as an ecclesiastical peacemaker in the Tritheistic controversy.<sup>9</sup>

The emperor most deeply involved with the Ghassānids was Justinian. In 529 he conferred on Arethas the extraordinary *Basileia* and made him supreme phylarch, the commander-in-chief of the Arab *foederati* in Byzantium. In addition he initiated a vigorous and enlightened oriental policy that encompassed not only Oriens but also the Red Sea area.<sup>10</sup> The Ghassānids served him well throughout the reign, and he placed full confidence in their loyalty in spite of malicious insinuations by Procopius, the chief historian of the reign, which evidently he completely ignored. The harmonious federate-imperial relation-

<sup>8</sup> A. H. M. Jones hardly mentions them when he discusses the *foederati*; see *LRE*, I, 199–202, and references to them are sporadic on pp. 154, 278, 294, and 611. Even more sporadic and insignificant are Grosse's, in a work that is a specialized monograph on Roman/Byzantine military history; see R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte*, 52, 53, 83, 86, 87, 294.

<sup>9</sup> Their role as protectors of the Monophysite confession throughout the 6th century is slightly better known to ecclesiastical historians.

<sup>10</sup> The intensive reexamination of the oriental policy of Justinian, involving the Ghassānids of Oriens, the Arabs of the Peninsula, the Himyarites of South Arabia, and the Ethiopians in Africa, undertaken in this volume, should contribute substantially to a better understanding of the extensive diplomatic offensive initiated by Justinian in the Orient, but which has been under a cloud because of the animadversions of Procopius against Justinian in the course of his *Kaiserkritik*. As the various chapters in this volume have shown, Justinian's foreign policy in the Orient was a bold and imaginative one, based on the informed recommendations of three generations of professional diplomats—the house of Nonnosus—who knew the area intimately.

ship collapsed later when one of the *diadochoilepigonoi* had Arethas' son arrested and another had him exiled to Sicily, measures that resulted in a bloody encounter before the walls of Bostra in which the Ghassānids vanquished the Byzantine army and killed the *dux* of the Provincia Arabia. The Ghassānid phylarchate was suspended for five years, an event that had far-reaching consequences for Arab-Byzantine relations.

The key to understanding this dramatic turn of events must be sought in Ghassānid Monophysitism. While the Salīhids of the fifth century lived in perfect unison with Chalcedonian Byzantium, as the Tanūkhids had done in the fourth century with the exception of the reign of Valens, the Ghassānids did not. They fell victim to the change of imperial dynasties in the sixth century which had conflicting theological positions. They had adopted Monophysitism during the reign of the Monophysite Anastasius, but the advent of Justin and his dynasty spelt disaster for them. As they remained faithful to their confession, they had to pay the price. Their continued loyal adherence to the Monophysite faith explains the tensions that the Ghassānid-Byzantine relationship experienced throughout the century and that finally led to an armed conflict, and, more serious, to the eventual failure of Justinian's enlightened Arab and Arabian policy. The Byzantine *ecclesia* contributed its generous share to the fall of the Ghassānids, perhaps even more than the imperial administration. It was against loyal and zealous fellow Christians such as the Ghassānids that the Chalcedonian *ecclesia*, intolerant of confessional pluralism, threw its weight and contributed to their downfall. As the final part of this trilogy (*BISC*) will explain, the disastrous course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations late in the century, which weakened the Ghassānids, contributed to the success of the great historical movement that was Islam and the Islamic Conquest—hence the importance of the Ghassānids in world history, and not only in the provincial history of Oriens in the proto-Byzantine period.<sup>11</sup>

### C

The conclusion of the second part of the trilogy with the completion of this volume makes it necessary to end this introduction with a few words on the larger historical framework within which the three volumes (*BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and *BASIC*) have been written—the history of the Diocese of Oriens in the proto-Byzantine period.

Oriens is an intelligible unit of historical study and research, distinct from Anatolia and Egypt, ethnically, linguistically, geographically, and cul-

<sup>11</sup> The historical might-have-been involved must be taken into account in the general reevaluation of the reign of Justinian. The eventual failure of his foreign policy should not be construed as a reflection on its soundness but on the poor judgment of his successors, who frustrated it.

turally. It deserves to be treated as such, both as a Byzantine diocese of the proto-Byzantine period and as the future Bilād al-Shām (and Jazīra) in the Arab-Umayyad period when it became the metropolitan province of the new Islamic empire. The three volumes in this series are a contribution to the history of this diocese as far as its federate Arab constituent is concerned. They have traced the history of the Arab *foederati*—the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids—mainly in the political, military, ecclesiastical, and administrative spheres, in the three centuries from the reign of Constantine to that of Heraclius.

Oriens, ethnically a Semitic region, received fresh and vigorous ethnic and cultural strains in its Hellenistic period. Cultural analysts have conceived of it as a bicultural region consisting of the Syriac/Aramaic and Hellenic elements. Such an analysis neglects the Arab and Arabic constituent which makes of Oriens a tricultural region. The previous volumes and the present one have touched lightly on the cultural life of the Arabs. Hence the Arab contribution to the cultural life of Oriens is not very clear and has not been easy to grasp. *BASIC II* will deal with their contribution in a substantial way, and the triculturalism of Oriens will clearly emerge, important for the proto-Byzantine period and also for the Umayyad, when the Arabs are no longer *foederati* but the new masters of Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām.<sup>12</sup>

As has been explained in the introduction to *BAFOC*, the Arabs in these volumes are not treated as such but as the Germans of the East, both as *foederati* for the empire and, proleptically, as the future conquerors of Oriens and the North African provinces. Thus these volumes have set the stage for comparative studies of the historic role of the two peoples, in spite of the obvious differences that obtained between them.<sup>13</sup>

When the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens are studied in this context, they are no longer anonymous groups lumped together under the umbrella title of "Saracens" but a succession of distinct groups, each of which had its own history and special relationship to the empire, in much the same way that the Goths, the Vandals, and the Franks each had their own history and identity. In the case of the Arabs, the principal groups of *foederati* were the

<sup>12</sup> Bicultural analysis of Oriens forgets that ethnically, politically, and militarily Oriens had been to a considerable degree Arab before the settlement of Pompey in 63 B.C.; for this, see *RA*. In spite of Hellenization, Romanization, and Christianization, Arab identity within the Arab sector in Oriens did not entirely disappear. The successive waves of *foederati* who gravitated toward Oriens from the Peninsula revived this Arab identity and conduced to the triculturalism of Oriens in this proto-Byzantine period.

<sup>13</sup> Almost every chapter in a recently published book is relevant to comparative studies of the two peoples: see *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwartz (Vienna, 1989).

Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids, the *foederati* of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries respectively.

These three volumes have been conceived as being at one and the same time a contribution to the study of the Arab federate constituent in the makeup of late antiquity in Oriens and also as prolegomena for the study of the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests, the drama of which has puzzled generation after generation of scholars who have tried to understand, *inter alia*, what happened to Roman arms on 20 August 636 on the battlefield of Yarmūk. That drama presents a highly complex web of problems. This series is a contribution toward a better understanding of that drama, as it fills the gap of three centuries that preceded the rise of Islam in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. The annihilating defeat of Yarmūk is a chapter in the theme "Byzantium and the Arabs," and the elucidation of that theme in the course of the three preceding centuries sheds a bright light on the mystery of that fateful battle, and with it the early Arab Conquests.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> On the recent contributions of Fred Donner and Walter Kaegi to this theme, see below, 646 note 41.

PART ONE  
POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORY





## I

### The Reign of Anastasius (491–518)

The reign of Anastasius witnessed relations with three important groups of Arab *foederati*: the Salīhids, the dominant Arab federate group of the fifth century; the Ghassānids, the newcomers, who contested Salīhid supremacy in Oriens; and the Kindites, the powerful Peninsular group that had moved in the orbit of the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia and now moved in that of Byzantium.

Many aspects of Byzantium's relations with these groups have already been treated, especially the various stages of Salīhid-Ghassānid relations and the emergence of the Ghassānids in the year 502 as the dominant federate Arab group in the service of Byzantium in the sixth century.<sup>1</sup> A chapter in the previous volume in this series, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century*, has treated the first decade of the reign of Anastasius to approximately the year 500. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the last two decades of the reign, beginning with the *foedus* of 502, which is due for a reexamination.

#### I. THE *FOEDUS* OF 502

The Ghassānids became the principal *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century in the year 502, when Anastasius concluded a treaty with the Arabs of Kinda and Ghassān. The inclusion of Ghassān in the *foedus* was argued for in an article that appeared in 1958, which examined the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic sources relevant to the Ghassānids.<sup>2</sup> The Greek source used in that article was Eustathius of Epiphania as preserved in Evagrius,<sup>3</sup> rather than Theophanes, because the traditional interpretation of the relevant passage in Theophanes precluded reference in it to the Ghassānids. But a closer examination of this passage in Theophanes, based on a better understanding of Ghassānid history before 502 and in light of recent gains made in the study of Ghassānid history in the Peninsular stage, shows it to be a crucial source for

<sup>1</sup> See the present writer in "The Last Days of Salīh," *Arabica* 5 (1958), 145–58; "Ghassān and Byzantium: A New *terminus a quo*," *Der Islam* 33 (1958), 232–55; and most recently in *BAFIC*, esp. 282–89, "The Fall of the Zokomids" and chap. 4 on the reign of Leo, where it is argued that the 5th-century phylarch Amorkesos was a Ghassānid.

<sup>2</sup> "Ghassān and Byzantium."

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 235–38.

the inclusion of the Ghassānids, not only the Kindites, in the *foedus* of 502. The passage is strikingly detailed and informative, a mine of information for Arab-Byzantine relations after the turn of the century. A careful and intensive analysis of it will not only recover precious data for Arab-Byzantine relations but also result in a contribution to both the improvement of the text of Theophanes and the interpretation of the passage. The passage in Eustathius of Epiphania now recedes into the background, especially as the truth about the inclusion of the Ghassānids in it was only inferred.<sup>4</sup>

The passage in Theophanes reads as follows: Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει σπένδεται πρὸς Ἀρέθαν Ἀναστάσιος, τὸν Βαδιχαρίμου καὶ Ὠγάρου πατέρα, τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον, καὶ λοιπὸν πᾶσα ἡ Παλαιστίνη καὶ Ἀραβία καὶ Φοινίκη πολλῆς γαλήνης καὶ εἰρήνης ἀπήλαυον.<sup>5</sup> ("In this year Anastasius concluded a treaty with Arethas, the father of Ma'dikarib and Hujr, τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον, and henceforward all Palestine, Arabia, and Phoenicia enjoyed tranquility and peace.")

The phrase τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον, left untranslated, has been the controversial one. It is commonly interpreted to refer to Arethas, the Kindite chief whose two sons, Ma'dikarib and Hujr, had raided the Byzantine *limes* and the limitrophe provinces of Oriens around the year 500.<sup>6</sup> The phrase has usually been translated "called the son of the Tha'labite woman," a further qualification or description of Arethas the Kindite, a matronymic, after the tecronymic involving his two sons, Ma'dikarib and Hujr. Thus what is involved in the passage, according to this interpretation, is a *foedus* with only Kinda, with no reference to Ghassān.

This interpretation of the phrase cannot be accepted, and on close examination may be seen to be open to many objections.

1. Theophanes had already identified the Arab chief called Arethas with whom Anastasius concluded the *foedus* when he described him as "the father of Ma'dikarib and Hujr," the two sons whom he had also mentioned before as having raided the Roman frontier around A.D. 500. Further qualification or description would be superfluous and indeed unprecedented in the practice of Byzantine authors when they refer to Arab personages.

2. The phrase itself as a matronymic is strange. It is not a clear reference to his mother's name, as when Procopius describes the Lakhmid king Mundir

<sup>4</sup> In the English translation of the Eustathius passage in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 236, the word "all" tries to bring out the force of the adverb πασσουδεῖ, "with all one's force." Nicephorus Callistus reproduces this passage but omits this word, apparently because its unclear meaning in the text remained so to him as well: *HE*, PG 147, col. 193, lines 18–19.

<sup>5</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (Leipzig, 1883–85), I, 144.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

(Alamoundaros) as "the son of Shaqīqa."<sup>7</sup> The matronymic is presented through the mediation of the tribe Tha'labā, to which allegedly the mother belonged. This strange and unusual way of identifying him enhances the chances that the phrase can bear a different and better interpretation.

3. Most decisive against the interpretation of the phrase as a matronymic is that the Arab chief in question was a well-known figure in the history of the Arabs and Arab-Byzantine relations around A.D. 500 and for another quarter century, and no Greek or Arabic source ever referred to him by this matronymic. His correct genealogical description is always through his patronymic, namely, "son of 'Amr." This patronymic has survived in the Arabic sources, and above all in a precious inscription set up in Ḥīra later in the century by his daughter Hind.<sup>8</sup>

4. The tribe of Kinda was a proud tribe; it was called *Kindat al-Mulūk*, "royal Kinda," and it is quite unlikely that one of its distinguished members would have called himself by a matronymic that allied him to another tribe, however important, such as Tha'labā, and, what is more, a North Arabian tribe on which the South Arabian tribe of Kinda must have looked with some condescension, especially as Arethas himself ruled the North Arabians,<sup>9</sup> including Bakr, the large tribal group to which Tha'labā belonged.

Those who have argued for the phrase as a matronymic of Arethas the Kindite did so because the Arabic tradition says that the mother of the Kindite chief belonged to the tribe of Tha'labā.<sup>10</sup> But this is different from saying, as the idiom of Theophanes clearly suggests, that he was *known*<sup>11</sup> as "the son of the Tha'labite woman." If the phrase had been simply parenthetical, reflecting the interest of the chronographer in inserting genealogical statements concerning his historical personages, the phrase would not have been unnatural; but as it stands in the text, it is a matronymic that *identifies* Arethas, and this is what is startling and provides cause for suspicion, since this is

<sup>7</sup> For Ἰλαμοῦνδαρος ὁ Σακκίης see Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.1. On the mother of Arethas see below, note 10.

<sup>8</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 24. The inscription mentions both his father and his grandfather: thus Arethas the Kindite appears as "Ḥārith, son of 'Amr, son of Ḥujr," without a matronymic in spite of the inscription's having been set up by a woman, his daughter Hind, who chose to commemorate her grandfather rather than her grandmother in giving her father's genealogy.

<sup>9</sup> On Kinda see G. Olinder, *The Kings of Kinda of the Family of Ākil al-Murār* (Lund, 1927), and, more recently, the present writer s.v. Kinda in *El*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Such as Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 48–49, 51–52, and Rothstein, *DLH*, 91–92, where the name of his mother is given as Umm Iyās.

<sup>11</sup> Supported by Theophanes' language in *Chronographia*, I, 141, where he speaks of Arethas as the father of Ḥujr, the Arab chief who raided the Byzantine *limes* around the year 500: Ὠγαρον, τὸν τοῦ Ἀρέθα, τοῦ τῆς Θαλαβάνης ὀνομαζομένου παιδός, thus paralleling λεγόμενον (144) with ὀνομαζόμενος (141).

not how he was known to his contemporaries and to the later sources, which know him by his patronymic, "son of 'Amr." The affiliation of his mother with the tribe of Tha'laba was only a strange coincidence, and the interpretation related to it has, consequently, to be rejected.

It is clear that the text of Theophanes must be reexamined and reinterpreted. It will be argued that:

1. Tha'laba is not a tribe but an individual; that the individual is not a woman but a man; and that he did not belong to the tribe of Tha'laba but was a Ghassānid chief who was the namesake of the tribe.<sup>12</sup>

2. Tha'laba is the father of Arethas, not the Kindite, but the Ghassānid Arethas, the father of Jabala.<sup>13</sup> Thus two Arethases are involved in the passage and in the *foedus*, a Kindite and a Ghassānid.

3. The text of Theophanes as it stands involves a haplography and a misunderstanding of the gender of the Arabic proper name Tha'laba. Consequently the text should read after πατέρα: <καὶ (πρὸς) Ἀρέθαν> τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον.<sup>14</sup>

Thus after the perturbation of A.D. 500 when the Ghassānid Jabala and the two Kindite brothers, Ma'dikarib and Hujr, had attacked the Byzantine frontier, Anastasius concluded a *foedus* in 502 with the two Arethases, who were the fathers of the Kindite and Ghassānid raider-chiefs respectively: Arethas the Kindite, son of 'Amr, and Arethas the Ghassānid, son of Tha'laba.<sup>15</sup> In support of all this, the following arguments may be adduced:

<sup>12</sup> A return to Nöldeke's surmise that what is involved in the phrase τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον is a reference to the Ghassānid Tha'laba. Nöldeke, however, did not argue the point, holding also that the Kindite Arethas mentioned in the text was the son of a Ghassānid princess from the house of Tha'laba. Cf. Nöldeke, *GF*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Theophanes is also in error in having Arethas son of Tha'laba, i.e., the Ghassānid, appear as the father of Hujr the Kindite (*Chronographia*, I, 141).

<sup>14</sup> Either Theophanes or a later scribe perpetrated the haplography through homoeography. However, the phrase τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον, for which an emendation is suggested here, must go back to the original contemporary document or to the source the chronographer had before him.

<sup>15</sup> The *foedus* with the Kindite Arethas is mentioned by Nonnosus, who supplements Theophanes' statement by saying that it was his grandfather Euphrasius who concluded the treaty. He is silent, however, on the *foedus* with Ghassān. An explanation would be that since Kinda was a Peninsular power, Euphrasius was sent to Arabia to negotiate with it alone; Ghassān, on the other hand, was *intra limitem*, having settled in Oriens before 502, and the Byzantine authorities made the treaty with it locally. Since it is Photius who preserves the resumé of Nonnosus' account, he may have been the one who omitted Ghassān.

In modern scholarship, R. Aigrain vouched for the *foedus* with Ghassān ("Arabie," *DHGE*, III, col. 1203); E. Stein's perspicacity suspected it (*HBE*, I, 92); the present writer argued for it in "Ghassān and Byzantium"; and M. Sartre accepted it (*TE*, 160, 163). The name of Nonnosus' grandfather is erroneously printed in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 237 note 18, as Eugenius, which should be corrected to Euphrasius.

1. The Arabic sources do speak of Tha'labā as the Ghassānid chief who led his tribal group from the Peninsula into Byzantine territory. The sources remember him well and give him the *laqab* (sobriquet) of "al-'Anqā'." Moreover, he is mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry on the Ghassānid dynasty and not only in the later secondary prose sources, a sure sign of the historicity of Tha'labā and the large figure he cut in early Ghassānid history.<sup>16</sup>

2. The final consonant (*t*) of the name Tha'labā(t)<sup>17</sup> normally indicates the feminine gender. This is the key to understanding the confusion noted above in the phrase "called the son of the Tha'labite woman." What is involved here is a man, Tha'labā, and not a woman. The feminine ending misled the original translator of the document on the *foedus* into thinking that the name given as that of the parent of Arethas, the Ghassānid, was that of his mother, and so he produced the curious τῆς Θαλαβάνης instead of τοῦ Θαλαβᾶ. The phrase should have read: τὸν τοῦ Θαλαβᾶ λεγόμενον.

3. The sources speak of Tha'labā as having a son by the name of Arethas,<sup>18</sup> who in turn was the father of Jabala, the father of the most famous of all Ghassānid kings and phylarchs, Arethas son of Jabala. Just as the two sons of the Kindite Arethas, Ma'dīkarib and Ḥujr, were conducting military operations for their father, so Jabala the Ghassānid was doing the same for his father, Arethas. In 502, when Byzantium decided to conclude a *foedus* with the Arab raiders, it did so with the two groups, Kinda and Ghassān, each of which happened to have a chief by the name of Arethas.

4. It is not difficult to see how the chronographer, or perhaps a copyist of his work, was confused by having to deal with two chiefs of the same name.<sup>19</sup> This confusion in the text is not unprecedented in Theophanes, who, in dealing with Arab and Oriental affairs, makes other mistakes: (1) in describing the events that led to the death of an Arab phylarch of Byzantium<sup>20</sup> around 530, he is unaware that he is the same person, the Kindite Arethas, whom he

<sup>16</sup> See below, "Byzantium and the Lakhmids," esp. for the Arabic sources.

<sup>17</sup> The final *t* of Arabic words is often muted in pronunciation and omitted in transliteration.

<sup>18</sup> See the genealogical table of the reliable source Hishām al-Kalbī, as given by Nöldeke, *GF*, 62; and in Hishām, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 618. Further on Arethas the Ghassānid, see below, 9–12.

<sup>19</sup> Modern European scholars have had similar difficulties in understanding texts involving two Arethases. In commenting on the passage in Malalas that dealt with two Arethases (*Chronographia*, Bonn ed., p. 435, line 5), one of them, Edmund Chilmead, not realizing that the passage involved not one Arethas but two, could not help exclaiming "an a mortuis revixit?" (ibid., p. 648). In Arabic, a language with a dual number, "the two Arethases" appear as *al-Ḥarithbān*, an expression in ancient Arabic poetry that presented problems of identification even to the old commentators.

<sup>20</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 179.

had mentioned in connection with the *foedus* of 502; (2) he gives the same name, Arethas, to the Ethiopian Negus, who around 530 received Julian, the diplomatic agent of Justinian.<sup>21</sup>

Unusually informative and genealogically detailed, this passage in Theophanes could have derived only from a document, a source such as the *scrinium barbarorum*. The one who prepared the Greek version of the *foedus* of 502 was misled by the feminine ending of the name of the Ghassānid chief into thinking that what was involved was a woman from the tribe of Thaʿlaba, and so he described Arethas the Ghassānid as “the son of the Thaʿlabite woman,” τὸν τῆς Θαλαβάνης λεγόμενον, thus providing Arethas with a matronymic instead of a patronymic. At the hands of a chronographer who wrote some three centuries after the document was prepared, the text experienced further confusion: haplography through homoeography, in this case owing to the fact that the two chiefs with whom the *foedus* was struck both had the same name, Arethas.

The Greek sources, Eustathius of Epiphania and Theophanes, that mention the *foedus* of 502 do not say anything about its terms. Only the Arabic sources mention them, especially Hishām al-Kalbī, who has preserved and transmitted some general recollection of the most important terms, namely, mutual military assistance. His account has been analyzed in the version preserved by Ibn Khaldūn,<sup>22</sup> but since then a fuller version preserved by Hishām’s own pupil, Ibn Ḥabīb, has become available.<sup>23</sup> It does not add much more to Ibn Khaldūn’s version, but, since texts of the *foedera* with the Arabs are so rare, it is necessary to present this fuller version and in light of it discuss whatever problems may be raised in relation to it.

1. In Ibn Ḥabīb’s version, the text of the treaty and the negotiations that preceded it come after the account of the victory of Ghassān over Salīḥ.<sup>24</sup>

And the king of the Rūm (Romans) feared lest they (the Ghassānids) should ally themselves with Persia against him. And so he wrote to Thaʿlaba saying, “You are a people of great might and numbers, and you have annihilated this Arab tribal group (the Salīḥ) who were the mightiest among the Arabs and the best equipped. And I am installing you in their place, and writing this covenant between us, namely, that if

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 244–45.

<sup>22</sup> See “Ghassān and Byzantium,” 238–42.

<sup>23</sup> See Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, ed. I. Lichtenstädter (Hyderabad, 1942), 371–72. For recent works on the *foedus* with barbarians, see G. Dagron, “Ceux d’en face: Les peuples étrangers dans les traités militaires byzantines,” *TM* 10 (1987), 207–32; E. Chrysos, “Legal Concepts and Patterns for the Barbarians’ Settlement on Roman Soil,” in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E. Chrysos and A. Schwartz (Vienna, 1989), 13–23.

<sup>24</sup> For this and an analysis of Salīḥid-Ghassānid relations, see *BAFIC*, 282–89.



any ill befalls you from the Arabs I will reinforce you with forty thousand Roman fighters with their armor, and if any ill befalls us from the Arabs you will contribute twenty thousand warriors, on condition that you will not interfere between us and Persia." Tha'labā accepted these terms, and so the treaty was written down. And (the king) made Tha'labā king and had him crowned; and the king of the Romans was called Di'yūs.<sup>25</sup> Then Tha'labā died and the Romans made his son Arethas (Ḥārith) king.

The important element in this account is the clause that stipulates mutual military assistance, but of course the numbers cannot be accepted; the original document must have contained different numbers, if any at all. The clause stipulated military assistance on the part of the Ghassānids to the Romans against the Arabs of the Peninsula. The *annona*, attested later in the century, may have been extended by Byzantium to the Ghassānids as one of the clauses of the *foedus* in return for military assistance.<sup>26</sup>

Was Ghassānid military assistance also expected against Persia? The text of the *foedus* as it survived in Ibn Ḥabīb precludes this. In fact this very text has been discussed in connection with the question of neutrality in Islamic literature, and the silence of the Arabic text on Ghassānid military obligations against the Persians was construed as evidence of Arab or Ghassānid neutrality vis-à-vis Byzantium and Persia.<sup>27</sup> It is possible that the primary concern of Anastasius in 502 was Ghassānid neutrality in the war with Persia. However, the course of Arab-Byzantine relations immediately after the *foedus* suggests that this was not the case: in 503 the Ghassānids attacked Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, vassals of Persia, and in the same year an Arab phylarch, al-Aswad, most probably a Kindite, fought against the Persians with Areobindus.<sup>28</sup> This may have been a development following almost immediately after the treaty was made, or else the text of Ibn Ḥabīb is inaccurate on this point. Participation in the campaigns of the Byzantine army of Oriens was one of the most important assignments of the Ghassānids, as it had been for the other Arab *foederati*, the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, in the fourth and fifth centuries respectively.

2. The reexamination of Theophanes' text and the realization that a haplography involving the two Arethases, the Kindite and the Ghassānid, occurs in it, yield the conclusion that the *foedus* with Ghassān was struck with the

<sup>25</sup> The correct name of the Roman emperor, Anastasius, has been preserved in Ya'qūbī's *Tārīkh* as Nūsher; see Nöldeke, *GF*, 9 with note 4.

<sup>26</sup> For reference to the *annona* in an Arabic source, see below, Appendix I.

<sup>27</sup> See M. Ḥamīdullāh, "Die Neutralität im islamischen Völkerrecht," *ZDMG* 89 (1935), 70-71.

<sup>28</sup> See below, 20.



Ghassānid Arethas and that with Kinda was struck with the Kindite Arethas. Thus between Tha'labā, the Ghassānid chief who led Ghassān into the *limes*, and Jabala, who conducted military operations against Byzantium around A.D. 500, there now comes Tha'labā's son Arethas, Jabala's father. This segment of the Ghassānid pedigree, Tha'labā→Arethas→Jabala, is vouched for by the most reliable of sources on the Ghassānids, Hishām,<sup>29</sup> and is now confirmed by a Greek source, Theophanes.

That Anastasius concluded the *foedus* with Arethas rather than with his son Jabala, the military leader, should cause no surprise, since the case of the Kindite Arethas provides an exact parallel. It was not the Kindite Arethas who fought against Byzantium but his two sons, Ma'dikarib and Ḥujr; and yet Anastasius concluded the *foedus* with the father, Arethas, who represented Kinda. So he did with the other Arethas, who represented Ghassān. The emergence of a Ghassānid chief by the name of Arethas around A.D. 500 out of the text of Theophanes, plagued by a haplography, presents a problem. In Hishām's text, the Ghassānid chief with whom Anastasius concludes the *foedus* is Tha'labā,<sup>30</sup> not his son Arethas. This discrepancy between the Greek and the Arabic source is, however, reconcilable. The Greek text, clearly deriving from an official Byzantine document, has to be followed. Consequently, it is not difficult to argue that Arethas acted for his father, Tha'labā, who either was too old to appear for the transaction or may have been dead by this time.<sup>31</sup> However, since he was the principal Ghassānid figure of this period, Hishām naturally remembered him and associated him with the *foedus*. As has been argued above, he also appears in the text of Theophanes, but only as part of the patronymic of his son Arethas, a sure sign that he does belong to this period of Ghassānid history and of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations.

3. Tha'labā, however, remains a major Ghassānid figure of this period, and the fact is reflected in the Arabic sources and confirmed by the Greek and the Syriac, so much so that he gave his name to the Ghassānid royal house, which was apparently known at this time as Banū Tha'labā, "the Sons of Tha'labā." Theophanes and Joshua the Stylite<sup>32</sup> have been drawn upon already in support of Tha'labā's powerful political and military presence in this period, but more evidence has accumulated since to support that presence,

<sup>29</sup> See Hishām, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, 618.

<sup>30</sup> Followed by the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 242, written before the haplography in Theophanes' text was suspected. Thus, in the earlier study, it was argued that the Ghassānid chief with whom Anastasius struck the *foedus* was Tha'labā; this is corrected here to his son Arethas.

<sup>31</sup> For an Arabic source confirming Tha'labā's death after he crossed the *limes*, see below, Appendix I.

<sup>32</sup> For evidence from Joshua the Stylite, see "Ghassān and Byzantium," 242-47, 251-53, 254-55.

strongly reflected in the appellation "the House of Tha'laba" or "Banū," "the Sons," "of Tha'laba."

A verse by the panegyrist of the Ghassānid dynasty, Ḥassān ibn-Thābit, speaks of the Ghassānids as "Banū al-ʿAnqa'," "Sons of the Long-Necked," the latter being the nickname of Tha'laba.<sup>33</sup> Yāqūt locates a toponym by the name of al-Tha'labiyya in Ḥijāz, and, according to one interpretation, it was named after this Ghassānid Tha'laba.<sup>34</sup> A letter written by the prophet Muḥammad was addressed to Banū Tha'laba from Ghassān.<sup>35</sup>

This appellation, Banū Tha'laba, raises the question of whether the Ghassānid royal house at this time was called Banū Tha'laba rather than Banū Jafna, which is the commonly held view.<sup>36</sup> This topic has already been discussed,<sup>37</sup> but in addition to what has been said, the following observations may be added. Genealogists recognize that among the Ghassānids there existed more than one house: in addition to the house of Tha'laba and the best-known one, the house of Jafna, there was also the house of Imru' al-Qays.<sup>38</sup> Whether the Ghassānid phylarchs and kings of the sixth century, such as Arethas, Muṇḍir, and Nu'mān, were descended from this house or were Jafnids, as is generally assumed, is not entirely clear and remains to be shown. But the various houses of Ghassān were related, and members of one house intermarried with another, so it is difficult, given the state of the sources, to draw definite conclusions.

4. The close examination of the passage in Theophanes and the confrontation of the conclusions drawn therefrom with the data in the Arabic sources have yielded two names to be added to the list of Ghassānid phylarchs and kings drawn up by Th. Nöldeke, which he had considered certain.<sup>39</sup> His list begins with Jabala, whom he assigns to roughly A.D. 500. However, Jabala now appears as a junior member of the dynasty who was only conducting military operations on behalf of more senior members,<sup>40</sup> namely, his father,

<sup>33</sup> See *The Dīwān of Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, ed. W. N. 'Arafāt, Gibb Memorial Series 25.1 (London, 1971), I, 35, verse 28. See also the verse of the pre-Islamic poet 'Awf ibn al-Aḥwaṣ in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. A. Shākir and 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1942), I, 173, line 2; the poet correctly identifies the three royal houses—Kinda, Ghassān, and Lakhm—through their patronymics.

<sup>34</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1955-57), II, 78; III, 36.

<sup>35</sup> See M. Ḥamīdullāh, *Majmū'at al-Watha'iq al-Siyasiyya* (Beirut, 1969), 98.

<sup>36</sup> So much so that Nöldeke entitled his famous monograph on the Ghassānids *Die Ghassānischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's*.

<sup>37</sup> See "Ghassān and Byzantium," 244 note 32.

<sup>38</sup> See Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1962), 472; and chap. 4 on the reign of Leo in *BAFIC*, discussing the career of Amorkesos.

<sup>39</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 52-53.

<sup>40</sup> After appearing as a doughty warrior fighting for Ghassān against Byzantium around the year 500, Jabala recedes into the background during the reign of his father, Arethas, at least in the sources, but emerges in the reign of Justin I, after Arethas' death, as the Ghassānid federate king.

Arethas, and his grandfather, Tha'labā, both of whom must now precede Jabala in the list of securely attested historical personages of the Ghassānid dynasty.

More is known in the Arabic sources about Tha'labā than about Arethas, and the Byzantine profile of Tha'labā's history has been discussed above. The sources are not informative on Arethas. While enumerating the buildings that the Ghassānid kings erected in Oriens, Ḥamza<sup>41</sup> says that Arethas did not build anything, though he reigned twenty years. This is probably correct, since it gives him a reign extending from ca. 500, when he concluded the treaty with Byzantium, to the end of the reign of Anastasius. According to Ḥamza, his son Jabala reigned for ten years,<sup>42</sup> and this too sounds roughly true since he died in the battle of Thannūris in 528.<sup>43</sup> So if this calculation is correct, the Ghassānid king during the last two decades of the reign of Anastasius was Arethas. That the sources are not informative on him during these two decades is probably due to their state of preservation.<sup>44</sup>

## II. THE PERSIAN WAR, 502–506

The Arabs, both those of Persia and those of Byzantium, played an important role in the Persian war of Anastasius' reign, a role, however, which has not been made clear in the standard histories<sup>45</sup> dealing with this war. With the exception of the reference to them in Theophanes,<sup>46</sup> it is the Syriac chronicle of Joshua the Stylite<sup>47</sup> that is the principal source for Arab participation in the war. It is from this chronicle, therefore, that most of the data on Arab participation will be extracted.

### Joshua the Stylite

In July 503 the Ghassānids, included in the *foedus* of the preceding year, mounted an offensive against the Persians through an attack on Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmid Arabs. Joshua's account reads as follows:<sup>48</sup> "The Arabs

<sup>41</sup> See his *Tārīkh*, p. 100.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> On this see the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān* (Brussels, 1971), 273–76.

<sup>44</sup> For a more informative Arabic source, see below, Appendix I. In that source Arethas is remembered not so much for his Byzantine connection as for his role in the internal history of Medina.

<sup>45</sup> The best general account of the Persian war is still Stein, *HBE*, II, 92–101, an account that does not neglect the Semitic Orient.

<sup>46</sup> For which see below, 20–21.

<sup>47</sup> See *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, ed. and trans. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882) (hereafter *Chronicle*). The author is said to have been a Monophysite living at Edessa toward the beginning of the 6th century who dedicated his *Chronicle* to an abbot named Sergius. On Joshua see W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), 77–78, and *ODB*, II, 1076.

<sup>48</sup> *Chronicle*, 45–46.

of the Greek territory also, who are called the Tha<sup>l</sup>abites, went to Hîrtâ (the capital) of Na<sup>l</sup>man, and found a caravan going up to him, and camels carrying to him. . . . They fell upon them and destroyed them and took the camels, but they did not make a stay at al-Hîra, because its inhabitants had withdrawn into the inner desert."

This is one of the most important episodes of the war recorded by Joshua, because it is the only operation attested in the sources associated with the name of the Ghassânids, who appear in the text as the Tha<sup>l</sup>abites or house of Tha<sup>l</sup>aba.<sup>49</sup> This balances the other operation associated with Kinda, the other party<sup>50</sup> in the *foedus* of 502. Although Joshua's chronicle contains many references to Arab participation in the war, by both Roman Arabs and Persian Arabs, there is no other explicit reference to the Roman Arabs as Ghassânids or one that could be construed as such. Except for those that pertain to the Lakhmid king Nu<sup>l</sup>man in the service of Persia, all the references bear no name; it remains to enumerate them as a reflection of the extent of Arab participation.

1. When Kawad, the Persian king, laid siege to Amida in October 502, the Lakhmid king Nu<sup>l</sup>mân took part in the siege.<sup>51</sup>

2. In November 502 the Byzantine army was defeated by the Persians who counted among them many Arabs and Huns; the Byzantines were "trampled and crushed under the hoofs of the horses of the Arabs."<sup>52</sup>

3. During the siege of Amida Kawad sent Nu<sup>l</sup>mân to the district of Hârrân, which he reached on 26 November, plundering it and taking captives. He came as far as Edessa, taking 18,500 captives from the region.<sup>53</sup>

4. In July 503 the Persian Arabs advanced as far as the Aborras (Khâbûr), but Timostratus, the *dux* of Callinicum, routed them.<sup>54</sup>

5. In August 503 the Persians came against Opadana, and the Byzantines under Patricius were beaten. In this encounter Nu<sup>l</sup>mân the Lakhmid fought and was wounded.<sup>55</sup>

6. Nu<sup>l</sup>mân urged Kawad to proceed against Edessa, which the latter did, though without Nu<sup>l</sup>mân who died from his head wound.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>49</sup> For the identification of the house of Tha<sup>l</sup>aba with the Ghassânids, see "Ghassân and Byzantium," 251-55. Which Ghassânid conducted this operation is not clear: possibly Arethas, probably Jabala, who is attested in the sources as the Ghassânid warrior of this period.

<sup>50</sup> See below, 19-22.

<sup>51</sup> As is clear from *Chronicle*, 47.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

7. In August 503 the Persian Arabs attacked Sarūj and reached the Euphrates, plundering and taking captives.<sup>57</sup>

8. In September 503 the Persian Arabs participated in the siege of Edessa, according to Joshua in the capacity of spearmen.<sup>58</sup>

9. In June 504 Constantine the renegade returned to Roman territory. The Roman Arabs took him to Sura and thence sent him to Edessa.<sup>59</sup>

10. In the same month ʿAdid the Arab, "who was under the rule of the Persians, surrendered with all his troops and became subject to the Greeks."<sup>60</sup> The name of this Arab chief is uncertain: it could be ʿAzīz or Yazīd. His identity is unclear, as is the reason why he defected to the Romans. The most plausible explanation is that he was a chief in the army of the Lakhmids who was outraged by their hostile attitude toward Christianity<sup>61</sup> and consequently defected, as Aspebetos had done in the reign of Theodosius II, Amorkesos in the reign of Leo,<sup>62</sup> and Imru' al-Qays in the reign of Constantine.<sup>63</sup>

11. Shortly before the conclusion of the truce of 505, the Byzantine Arabs (clearly federates) took part in the general forays of the Byzantine army that was encamped near Amida, and, in the words of the Stylite, "they plundered and took captive and destroyed all that they found in the Persian territory."<sup>64</sup>

12. The last mention of the Arabs in Joshua's chronicle comes after the truce<sup>65</sup> of 505 between Persia and Byzantium. Both the Persian Arabs and the Roman Arabs crossed over into enemy territory and took captives, but were punished by the Persian and the Roman commanders respectively. The Persian commander Marzban put the chiefs of the Persian Arabs to death for this violation of the truce, and the *dux* Timostratus inflicted the same punishment on five Arab chiefs.<sup>66</sup>

The following conclusions may be drawn from a close examination of these references to the Arabs in Joshua's chronicle.

1. Joshua is the main source documenting the participation in the war of both the Ghassānids, the federates of Byzantium, and the Lakhmids, the federates of Persia.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 50–51.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>61</sup> Witness the blasphemy of Nu'mān against Christian Edessa in answer to the warning by a Christian chief in his army not to attempt to besiege it: *Chronicle*, 47.

<sup>62</sup> On both see *BAFIC*, 40–49, 51–106.

<sup>63</sup> On Imru' al-Qays see *BAFOC*, 31–53.

<sup>64</sup> *Chronicle*, 64.

<sup>65</sup> Referred to *ibid.*, 67.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 69–71.

2. With the exception of the reference to the campaign of the house of Tha'labā against Ḥīra, the rest of the references to the federate Arabs of Byzantium are anonymous, without any mention of tribal affiliation; the federates are referred to simply as the "Arabs of the Greek territory." Since Joshua was writing about the operations in Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Osrhoene, his account is valuable for documenting Arab federate presence in the northern provinces of Oriens, on which there is little evidence in the sources.<sup>67</sup>

3. It is clear from Joshua's account that the Lakhmid Arabs of Persia played a much more important role in the war than did the federates of Byzantium, Ghassānid or other. This is reflected not only in the number of references to them but also in the importance of the military duties assigned to them or the operations they undertook themselves. These Lakhmid operations are centered on their king Nu'mān, a doughty warrior, who before the turn of the century had attacked Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis. In this war he took part in the siege of Amida, ravaged the countryside around Ḥarrān and took captives, and finally participated in the engagement around Opadana in which he received the head wound from which he died (Aug.–Sept. 503) before he could join his overlord Kawad in the siege of Edessa.

4. Lakhmid participation in the war after the death of Nu'mān is not described by this source in terms of named leaders. Nu'mān's even doughtier son and successor Munḍir, the Alamoundaros of Procopius and the Greek sources, is unknown to Joshua, though not to others, such as Cyril of Scythopolis<sup>68</sup> who records a campaign of his against Palestine late in 503. It is unlikely that he would suddenly have become inactive for the two or three years of the war that remained after his father's death. It is thus possible that he was in charge of the operations recorded by the Stylite for this period but is not named. If so, one might divide the Lakhmid profile of this Persian war as falling into two phases, the first associated with Nu'mān, the second with his son Munḍir.

5. Joshua's statement on the fate of both the Persian Arabs and the Byzantine Arabs who dared to disturb the truce concluded in 505 is striking. The ultimate punishment was meted out to them: death to their chiefs, as a reflection of the genuine desire of the two empires to uphold the peace and not have it broken by Arab raids. Who these Byzantine Arabs were is not clear. It is unlikely that they were federate Arabs, who were paid the *annona*

<sup>67</sup> To these and the Ghassānids may possibly be added also the Tanūkhids of the 4th century and the Salīhids of the 5th, who also may have participated. Areobindus the *magister militum per Orientem*, as will be pointed out below, called on the dukes of Oriens to participate, and they must have brought with them the Arab federates of the provinces this side of Oriens to the south of the Euphrates, where the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, as well as federates belonging to other tribal groups, were settled.

<sup>68</sup> On this see below, 18–19, 26–28.



by Byzantium and knew their duties. It is more likely that they were non-federate Arabs settled within the Byzantine *limes*, who saw in the Byzantine-Persian war a conflict that offered them opportunities for raiding and looting.<sup>69</sup>

Although these references in Joshua to Arab participation in the war justify drawing conclusions on the crucial role of the Arabs on both sides, the validity of these conclusions is not only inferential. It is vouched for by Joshua himself in two striking statements.

a. On the antecedents of the war he says: "And the Arabs, when they learned that he (Kavad) was going to make war with the Greeks, thronged to him with great alacrity."<sup>70</sup> This is illustrated by the actions of Nu<sup>ḥ</sup>mān a few years before the outbreak of the war when he attacked Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, thus expressing the displeasure of his overlord Kawad at Byzantium's refusal to pay the annual subsidy for the upkeep of the Caspian Gates.<sup>71</sup>

b. Even more telling is Joshua's statement, toward the end of his chronicle, when he was reflecting on the war as a whole and the role of the Arabs. Just before the truce<sup>72</sup> was concluded in 505, he said to the abbot Sergius, to whom he dedicated the chronicle: "As I know you study everything with great care, your holiness must be well aware of this, that to the Arabs on both sides this war was a source of much profit, and they wrought their will upon both kingdoms."<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> The disavowal of both the Persian Arabs and the Roman Arabs by their respective overlords recalls a similar episode in 484, when raids by both the Persian and the Roman Arabs involved both empires but failed to disturb the prevailing peace; see *BAFIC*, 115–19.

<sup>70</sup> *Chronicle*, 16.

<sup>71</sup> Actions to be paralleled often by his son Mundir during his fifty-year reign, as will become clear.

<sup>72</sup> Negotiations for the truce were begun in the first half of 505, related to the evacuation of Amida; but the treaty was not concluded until November 506, to run for seven years; see Stein, *HBE*, I, 99, 101 with note 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Chronicle*, 64. The wealth of evidence in Joshua for Arab participation in this short war is noteworthy. The *Chronicle*, being a local, regional work, includes this evidence in a detailed and informative way. What is recorded in Greek historians is thin by comparison, showing that Arab participation either has been neglected or its record has not survived.

In this connection it may be pointed out that John of Nikiou records a raid by Arabs from the Peninsula against Araite/Raithou (Arabic al-Rāya) in Sinai, where they killed some of the monks there and returned with much booty. Anastasius had forts constructed to defend the monks against future raids; see *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, trans. R. H. Charles (London, 1916), 125. It is not clear when in Anastasius' reign this raid took place. The editor (p. 125 note 2) compares Evagrius, *HE*, III, 36; this, however, is Evagrius' chapter deriving from Eustathius of Epiphania treating the general assault of the Ghassānids and the Kindites around the year 500 and the *foedus* of 502. The raid on Araite recorded by John seems an isolated one, not related to the much more serious general operations of ca. 500. The editor thus misled Bury into making such a connection; see Bury, *HLRE*, I, 434 note 4. Perhaps Bury had also been misled by the editors of Evagrius who, in commenting on the campaigns and the treaty, also referred to John of Nikiou; see Evagrius Scholasticus, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898, repr. Amsterdam, 1964), III, 36.

After the conclusion of the treaty in 506, peace reigned between the two empires, and the Arab allies of both observed it scrupulously. Hence there is no reference to the Arabs in the sources in this period nor in the five years that remained of the reign of Anastasius following the technical expiration of the treaty in the autumn of 513. The only reference to the Arabs comes in connection with Anastasius' building of Daras. According to Joshua, it was Byzantine fear of the Arabs<sup>74</sup> on the Persian side when the Byzantines made expeditions across the border that finally induced Anastasius to build Daras, which thus balanced Persian Nisibis as a strong fort to protect the Byzantine frontier in Mesopotamia.

### III. BYZANTIUM AND THE LAKHMIDS: MUNDIR

The Lakhmid king Mundir, who for some fifty years was the Byzantine empire's most dangerous Arab adversary,<sup>75</sup> and who died in 554, made his debut during the Persian war of Anastasius' reign. Cyril of Scythopolis records an audacious invasion of the two provinces of Arabia and Palestine by the Lakhmid king which carried him to Palaestina Prima, to the heart of the Palestinian monastic establishment in the Desert of Juda.<sup>76</sup> Cyril's account provides valuable documentation of the whereabouts of the Lakhmid king so early in the century, but it also raises a number of questions.

1. The first question is the date of this Lakhmid invasion. The only indication in Cyril is the statement that Mundir's invasion and his activities against the Romans took place after the fall of Amida to the Persians, which occurred in January 503 and thus provides one terminus. The presumption is that Mundir's invasion of Palestine came not long after the fall of the city. The *Chronicle* of Joshua the Stylite provides another terminus, namely, the death of Mundir's father Nu'man<sup>77</sup> in August–September 503. Thus Mundir could not have undertaken the invasion of Palestine before the summer of 503 since his father was still alive then, and Cyril explicitly states that he invaded after he became the king of the Persian Arabs: Ἰαλαμοῦνδαρος ὁ Σικίτης βασιλέως ἀξίωμα τῶν ὑπὸ Πέρσας τελοῦντων Σαρακηνῶν εἰληφῶς ἐπῆλθεν τῆι τε Ἀραβίαι καὶ Παλαιστίνῃ.<sup>78</sup> His accession to the kingship

<sup>74</sup> The term in Syriac is not the usual *Ṭayyāyē* but *'Arab* (*Chronicle*, 83, line 11), on which see J. B. Segal, "Mesopotamian Communities from Julian to Islam," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 41 (1955), 119–20. The most natural explanation for this term is that it is precisely *'Arab*, the transliteration of what the Arabs in this region apparently called themselves, i.e., the collective term *'Arab* rather than the name of a particular tribe such as *Ṭayy*, which gave rise to the Syriac *Ṭayyāyē* as a generic name for all Arabs.

<sup>75</sup> See Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.40.

<sup>76</sup> Recorded by Cyril of Scythopolis in his *Life of John Hesychastes*: see *Kyrrillos von Skythopolis*, ed. E. Schwartz, TU 49 (Leipzig, 1939), p. 211.

<sup>77</sup> *Chronicle*, 47.

<sup>78</sup> *Kyrrillos*, p. 211, lines 15–17.



then took place after the summer of 503, but the further question arises as to how much later. Negotiations for concluding a truce between the Persians and the Byzantines started early in 505, and both parties refrained from military operations. Mundir's invasion must thus have taken place during this interval between his father's death in 503 and the inception of the peace negotiations in the first half of 505. The reference to the fall of Amida in Cyril's text naturally suggests that the invasion happened not long after it—in the same year (503) but late in the year or possibly early in 504.<sup>79</sup> This is the most natural explanation for a dating pegged to the fall of Amida.

2. An invasion of a faraway province, so distant from the main theater of war in Mesopotamia and Osroene where the frontiers of the two empires were contiguous, raises the question of what inspired this military operation. Three answers suggest themselves.

a. In July 503 the Ghassānids, under the name of the house of Tha'laba, invaded Lakhmid territory and occupied the capital, Ḥīra.<sup>80</sup> Nu'mān, its king, was away, but he vowed to take revenge for the Ghassānid occupation of his capital and so urged Kawad to lay siege to Edessa. His son's invasion of Palestine may be seen in this light, as an act of retaliation against the Ghassānids who were settled in Arabia and possibly in Palaestina Tertia.

b. The rampant paganism of the Lakhmids, especially Nu'mān and his son Mundir, was notorious, as were their anti-Christian outbursts. Nu'mān is said by Joshua the Stylite to have died after a heated altercation with a Christian chief in his army concerning the siege of the "Blessed City" of the Christian Orient, Edessa. It is possible that his son wanted to wreak vengeance on the holiest of cities, Jerusalem, after the Christian in his father's army had prophesied that he would not be able to capture Edessa.<sup>81</sup>

c. Church treasures were an attraction to Saracen raiders. Mundir's father had attacked Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, probably tempted by the prospect of acquiring its treasures.<sup>82</sup> Mundir may have thought the Holy Land especially rich and worthy of his plundering. In 542 Chosroes thought so: "And his purpose was to lead the army straight for Palestine in order that he might plunder all their treasures, especially those in Jerusalem. For he had it from hearsay that this was an especially goodly land and peopled by wealthy inhabitants."<sup>83</sup>

It was an audacious military operation. The *duces* of Arabia and Palestine were away in the north fighting in Mesopotamia and Osroene, and Mundir was able to penetrate the Byzantine defense system and reach Palaestina

<sup>79</sup> On an alternative dating for Mundir's invasion of Palestine, see below, Appendix II.

<sup>80</sup> *Chronicle*, 45–46.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. above, note 61.

<sup>82</sup> For Nu'mān's campaign in Euphratensis, which had as its objective the capture of Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), see *BAFIC*, 121–25.

<sup>83</sup> See Procopius, *History*, II.xx.18.

Prima. The phylarchs of the Parembole were too weak to repulse the invasion, and could only alert the monastic communities to it.<sup>84</sup>

The one who mounted an offensive so boldly against Palestine and Arabia is not likely to have remained inactive after he returned to Ḥīra. He must have participated in the Persian war effort against Byzantium during the time between his campaign in Palestine and the negotiations for the truce in 505. As both parties observed the truce scrupulously, Muṇdir must have remained quiet after that date, and so he continued to remain for the rest of Anastasius' reign, even after the truce technically expired in November 513 and was not renewed. Sabaic epigraphic evidence, however, shows that he was fighting not against Byzantium in Oriens but against the Ḥimyarite king Maḍikarib in central Arabia.<sup>85</sup>

#### IV. BYZANTIUM AND KINDA

Kinda was the other party in the *foedus* of 502. In spite of the fact that it was Ghassān that proved to be the more important federate of Byzantium in the sixth century, Kinda did play a role in Arab-Byzantine relations during this period, a role made possible by the *foedus* of 502 which initiated its federate relationship with Byzantium. It is therefore necessary to examine Kindite-Byzantine relations during the reign of Anastasius.

1. The questions raised about Ghassān and the terms of its *foedus* with Byzantium may be raised about Kinda, but they are more difficult to answer, since it is not entirely clear whether Kinda, or at least a part of it, was allowed to settle within the *limes* as Ghassān was, or whether it remained a Peninsular power. The problem is further complicated by lack of information on where exactly in Oriens part of Kinda was settled. In the case of the Ghassānids, this is known from references in the sources to toponyms associated with them, and the Provincia Arabia was certainly one within which they were settled. Kinda probably was settled in Palestine, since later in the century, around 530, some Kindites, including Arethas himself with whom the *foedus* of 502 was made, are associated with Palestine.<sup>86</sup> Which of the three Palestines Kinda settled in is not clear: one would immediately think of Palaestina Tertia, but Prima<sup>87</sup> is not excluded, at least for the later period around 530. Whether or not Kinda received the *annona foederatica* is not clear, but if it participated in the Persian war, as will be argued below, the chances are that it did.

<sup>84</sup> Kyrillos, 211–12. On the phylarchs of the Parembole, see *BAFIC*, 40–49.

<sup>85</sup> For this Sabaic inscription see *BASIC II* (forthcoming).

<sup>86</sup> On this see Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 434. On the Kindite chief Qays and his *hēgemonia* over the Palestines, which must have included Prima, see the present writer's "Byzantium and Kinda," *BZ* 53 (1960), 57–73.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69.

2. In the detailed account of the Persian war of Anastasius' reign there is no explicit reference to the participation of Kinda as there is to that of the Ghassānids, who appear there as the house of Tha'labā. But there is a reference to a phylarch in a Greek source, and it will be argued that he most probably represented Kinda in this Persian war.

While recounting the campaign of Areobindus, *magister militum per Orientem*, in the vicinity of Nisibis, Theophanes mentions that he had with him the Byzantine commander Romanus and the Arab phylarch Asoudos, al-Aswad.<sup>88</sup> The campaign, which had begun in May 503, turned out to the advantage of the Byzantines; and the question arises as to the identity of this Arab phylarch.

Coming so close to the *foedus* of 502 with Kinda and Ghassān, the appearance of this contingent of Arab *foederati* led by al-Aswad implies the presumption that they belonged to one or the other of the two new Arab allies of Byzantium. Since al-Aswad does not appear as a Ghassānid name,<sup>89</sup> the probabilities are in favor of his having been a Kindite. The same chronographer who recorded the information on the *foedus* of 502 and its antecedents<sup>90</sup> also recorded the fulfillment of the military obligations of Byzantium's new Arab allies, namely, that they helped in the war against Persia. The precision given to his account by providing the name of the phylarch suggests that he used a primary source such as a document similar to the one he drew on for data on the *foedus* of 502. This source is not known but is likely to be Eustathius of Epiphania, who, according to Malalas, wrote about the Persian war of Anastasius' reign and described the defeat of the generals Anastasius appointed, although he died before completing his narrative.<sup>91</sup>

It might be objected that Kinda was settled in southern Oriens, according to one view probably in Palestine, while Aswad is found fighting in the far north. It was, however, a general war involving the *magisterium* of Oriens in which the *magister militum per Orientem* himself, Areobindus, took part. Accordingly, he must have drawn on contingents from the various provinces making up the Diocese of Oriens. This is confirmed by Joshua the Stylite, who says that on the termination of the campaign of 505, Celer, the *magister officiorum*, returned to Constantinople, while Areobindus and the commanders Patricius, Phramazan, Theodore, and Calliopus went back to Melitene, Apamea, Damascus, and Mabboug respectively.<sup>92</sup> The *dux* of the Provincia

<sup>88</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 146, line 9.

<sup>89</sup> That he was not a Ghassānid is further corroborated by the fact that the famous Arethas the Ghassānid fought in Palestine in the 540s a phylarch named al-Aswad; see below, 251–54.

<sup>90</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 141, 143.

<sup>91</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 399.

<sup>92</sup> Melitene was in Armenia, Apamea in Syria, Damascus in Phoenicia, and Mabboug in Euphratensis; see Joshua, *Chronicle*, 68.

Arabia, Gainas, also participated in the Persian war and was killed.<sup>93</sup> Thus this suggests that Areobindus did draw on military units stationed in various parts of Oriens. Hence the Arab federates in the various provinces, including the Kindites, were involved. Especially important is the participation in the Persian war of Romanus, the same man who defeated the Kindites around 500, when he was *dux* of Palestine. Since apparently he was transferred to Euphratensis, possibly as *comes rei militaris*, he could have brought Aswad and his federate Kindites with him.<sup>94</sup>

This Arab phylarch who took part in the successful campaign in the vicinity of Nisibis is not mentioned again in Theophanes. He must, though, have continued to take part in the remaining campaigns of Areobindus, since it is unlikely that after a successful campaign with the *magister* his services would have been dispensed with.<sup>95</sup> Areobindus continued to direct military operations until 505, when, as *magister militum per Orientem*, he returned to Antioch. The presumption is that the Kindite Aswad continued to operate with him, especially as he himself was not very competent and the Arab phylarch's aid would have been invaluable in the arid desert terrain of the region and in dealing with his congeners on the Persian side. After his success in the vicinity of Nisibis, Areobindus withdrew to Constantia, shut himself up in Edessa during its siege, and then invaded Persia in 504 when Celer, the Master of the Offices, had unified the Byzantine command under his direction.<sup>96</sup> The chances are that Aswad participated with Areobindus in all these operations.

3. As has already been mentioned, Kinda was not only a federate of Byzantium, with part living within the *limes*, but also a Peninsular power having its base in Arabia proper. This is clear from the missions of the house of Nonnosus to Kinda's rulers in the first thirty years of the sixth century.<sup>97</sup> The valuable account of his diplomatic mission left by the grandson, Nonnosus, as well as those of his father and grandfather have, however, left no clear geographical indication of where in the Arabian Peninsula the capital of Kinda was located.

Fortunately, the Arab geographers have something to say on the subject. They associate Kinda with two places: 'Āqil in Najd, and Ghamr dī Kinda in Ḥijāz, about two days' journey from Mecca.<sup>98</sup> The latter was the Kindite

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>94</sup> For Romanus see *PLRE*, II, 948.

<sup>95</sup> Further on this, see below, 23.

<sup>96</sup> For Areobindus' activities see *PLRE*, II, 144.

<sup>97</sup> On these diplomatic missions of the house of Nonnosus, see "Byzantium and Kinda," 57–73.

<sup>98</sup> On these two toponyms see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, IV, 68–69 for 'Āqil, and *ibid.*, 211–12 for Ghamr dī Kinda.

capital to which Nonnosus came on his diplomatic mission. One topographical reference in Nonnosus' account leads to pinpointing the residence of Kinda in *Ghamr dī Kinda* in *Ḥijāz*,<sup>99</sup> not *ʿĀqil* in *Najd*. Kinda thus was settled at least partly in western Arabia, another reason for its importance in a Byzantine Arabian policy that involved the whole of western Arabia, both *Ḥijāz* in the north and *Yaman* in the south.

#### V. PROCOPIUS

It has been argued that in his account of the Arab federates during the reign of Justinian Procopius did not write *sine ira et studio* and that furthermore his account of them was an expression of his *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>100</sup> It has also been pointed out that, in the expression of his *Kaiserkritik*, Procopius treated the reign of Anastasius in such a way as to suggest that he used it as a foil against which to set that of Justinian and his uncle Justin I.<sup>101</sup> Anastasius is portrayed as a wise and cautious ruler who does not rush into decisions that would be disastrous to the state, while both Justin and Justinian are portrayed as the opposite; Justinian is moreover presented as the great innovator who overturned all the established institutions of the Roman state. Justinian's Arab policy, involving both *Ghassān* and *Kinda*, is set within this context. *Ghassānid-Byzantine* and *Kindite-Byzantine* relationships are presented as sudden innovations on Justinian's part around 530, with no roots or precedents in the reign of any previous emperor.

The intensive study of Anastasius' reign undertaken here and in *BAFIC* has confirmed the conclusion drawn in articles published earlier with regard to Procopius' account of the Arabs in the reign of Justinian. It also provides occasion to document in some detail his employment of the technique of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in his account of the reign of Anastasius,<sup>102</sup> the same that he employed so successfully in his account of the Arabs under Justinian. This technique involved his handling of *Ghassān*, *Kinda*, and *Anastasius*.

#### *Ghassān* and *Kinda*

The *foedus* of 502 with both *Ghassān* and *Kinda* was a most important diplomatic transaction in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations: it estab-

<sup>99</sup> As will be argued in the section "Byzantium and Mecca" in *BASIC II*. A substantial article by Z. Rubin, "Byzantium and Southern Arabia—the Policy of Anastasius," appeared in *BAR* 553 (Oxford, 1989), 383–420. As the problems it deals with are related to South Arabia and Ethiopia, it is more relevant to *BASIC II*, where it will be noticed.

<sup>100</sup> For this see the present writer, "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ* 50 (1957), 39–67, 362–82, and "Procopius and Kinda," *BZ* 53 (1960), 74–78.

<sup>101</sup> "Procopius and Kinda," 77–78.

<sup>102</sup> Only lightly touched upon *ibid.*

lished the two powerful Arab groups as federates of the empire for the entire sixth century and until the battle of Yarmūk in 636. Of this treaty, made by Anastasius, there is not a word in Procopius. Unlike him, Theophanes was writing a large-scale historical work covering the events of many centuries, and yet the *foedus* found place in his *Chronography*; it does not appear in the pages of a historian who was writing a detailed history of a single reign prefaced by an account of the preceding reigns, including that of Anastasius. Procopius, writing only some fifty years after the conclusion of the *foedus*, would have been more concerned with it and have known such documentation as was known centuries later to the chronographer.<sup>103</sup>

Although the Arab participation in the Persian war of Anastasius' reign was considerable, Procopius suppressed it completely, although he treated the course of the war in detail.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps he was not informed about the Ghassānid occupation of Ḥīra in July 503 as reported by Joshua the Stylite, but Kinda's role must have been known to him. The Arab phylarch Aswad led a contingent of federates who operated with Areobindus, *magister militum per Orientem*, and if Theophanes with his lesser interest in such events knew about him, so must Procopius have done. Procopius gives a very detailed account<sup>105</sup> of the commanders accompanying Areobindus in the Nisibis campaign of 503, including "barbarian" commanders such as the Goths Godidisklus and Bessas, but he omits Aswad's name in this operation and the others up to Areobindus' return to Antioch in 505.<sup>106</sup> Aswad must have continued to fight in Areobindus' operations after Nisibis, since it would not have made sense to dismiss him after a victorious campaign in which his knowledge of the terrain and of the fighting methods of the Arab contingents on the enemy side would have made his performance creditable.

If Procopius did not know of the Ghassānid attack on Ḥīra in 503, he certainly did know of Jabala the Ghassānid, occupier of the island of Iotabe, who was worsted after a fierce battle by Romanus, *dux* of Palestine. Jabala played an important part in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations for some thirty years before his death in 528 in the battle of Thannūris,<sup>107</sup> where he fought for Byzantium against the Persians. However, Jabala appears only once in Pro-

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 78 note 15.

<sup>104</sup> Procopius, *Wars*, I.vii-x.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., I.viii.1-3.

<sup>106</sup> Joshua has Areobindus continuing in active service as *magister militum per Orientem* until 505, when he returns to Antioch, while Procopius has him going to Constantinople in 503; see Joshua, *Chronicle*, 68; Procopius, *Wars*, I.ix.1.

<sup>107</sup> Zacharia Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. E. W. Brooks, CSCO 88 (Louvain, 1924), 64. For the identity of Jabala with the Aṭṭar mentioned in Zacharia, see Shahīd, *Martyrs*, 273-76.



copius, as an element in the patronymic of his son Arethas, who was honored with the general *Basileia* of 530, created for him by Justinian.<sup>108</sup> Jabala's name appeared in Byzantine official documents that were certainly known to Procopius. What is more, Jabala, Procopius' contemporary, fought in Belisarius' theater of operations in the first Persian war under Justinian, events well known to Procopius who was Belisarius' secretary. Yet the historian is silent on this Ghassānid, and consequently the *Basileia* of his son in 530 (for which Procopius took Justinian to task) is presented as conferred on an unknown phylarch instead of the son of a famous warrior, a federate of Byzantium for some thirty years, who laid down his life fighting for the empire against its old enemy, Sasanid Persia.

#### Anastasius

Procopius used the technique of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* to make Anastasius a foil for Justin and Justinian. He suppressed a further truth about Anastasius, one of no small significance pertaining to his Arab policy. Throughout the pages of Procopius, Anastasius is portrayed as a sound financier, which he in fact was.<sup>109</sup> He refuses to pay money to the Persian king, for which he is lauded. However, Procopius omits saying that the same emperor who refused to make payment in 502 initiated war against Persia and was finally forced in 506 to conclude a seven-year treaty<sup>110</sup> stipulating an annual payment to the Persians of 550 pounds of gold. Procopius is silent on this provision<sup>111</sup> because he does not want to tarnish the reputation of the emperor whom he had praised for refusing to pay Kawad in 502, by saying that this was forced on him in the wake of his having had to ransom Amida from the Persians for a thousand pounds of gold.

In contrast to the peace that prevailed in the fifth century, war is the distinctive feature of Persian-Byzantine relations in the sixth. War with Persia flared up in the reign of each sixth-century emperor and finally led to the catastrophes of the seventh century. The first of these wars was that of Anastasius' reign. Though Anastasius died in 518, his Persian adversary and counterpart, Kawad, lived until 531, and the question of the annual payments refused in 502 by Anastasius continued to be an issue between the two empires until it brought about the war of Justin I's reign, followed by those of the rest of the century. This raises questions about the wisdom of the refusal in 502 by Anastasius, the emperor of whose judgment Procopius chose to speak in laudatory terms.

<sup>108</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, I.vii.1-2, x.10-12.

<sup>110</sup> For this see Stein, *HBE*, II, 99, 101.

<sup>111</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.ix.24.

## APPENDIX I

Wahb ibn-Munabbih: *Kitāb al-Tījān*

The most detailed account of the wanderings of the Ghassānids in the Peninsular stage of their history is found in the *Kitāb al-Tījān*<sup>1</sup> of Wahb ibn-Munabbih, the Yamanite writer of the early Islamic period.<sup>2</sup> The account is colored by the author's tendency to glorify the Ghassānids as a Yamanite,<sup>3</sup> South Arabian group, and consequently it contains embroideries and embellishments. But the general features of the story of Ghassān's Peninsular period are undoubtedly historical, and the kernels of truth in the account are not hard to identify. The account is also informative on Ghassānid-Salīhid and Ghassānid-Byzantine relations with special reference to the *foedus* of 502; hence the discussion of the *Kitāb al-Tījān* supplements the more sober account of Hishām for the period of Anastasius' reign. The following data may be recovered from the account as worthy of being taken seriously.

1. Tha'laba emerges as an important historical figure during the Peninsular stage of Ghassānid history; he dies not long after Ghassān becomes involved with Salīh and Byzantium,<sup>4</sup> and is succeeded by his son Ḥārith (Arethas). This is consonant with the argument presented above on the haplography involving the two Arethases in Theophanes' text. The leading role given to Tha'laba in this source reinforces the conclusions on the designation of the Ghassānids as Banū Tha'laba after their distinguished ancestor.

2. Jid' emerges as a much more important figure than the accounts of Hishām and Ya'qūbī, or what has survived of them, would have one believe. Duties are assigned to him other than dealing with the Salīhid tax collector, which gave rise to the proverb "Take from Jid' what Jid' chooses to give you." He is associated with the settlement of the Azd and the Ghassānids in Medina, and with Arab-Jewish relations there. The details are such as to argue for a historical basis for this account of Jid'. He may thus be added to the list of authentic figures in early Ghassānid history, along with Tha'laba.<sup>5</sup> Both are related to the two Ghassānid figures of earlier times, 'Amr and 'Āmir, son and father respectively, and it is as 'Amr ibn-'Āmir that both appear in the authentic pre-Islamic poetry of Ḥassān and Nābigha.<sup>6</sup>

3. Ḥārith (Arethas), also called Ḥāritha, Tha'laba's son, is the Ghassānid who is given an important role in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, not his father who died shortly after contact with the Byzantines had been established. He also figures in the

<sup>1</sup> See Wahb ibn-Munabbih, *Kitāb al-Tījān* (Ṣan'ā', Yemen, 1979).

<sup>2</sup> See R. G. Khoury, *Wahb ibn Munabbih* (Wiesbaden, 1972); Rosenthal, *HMH*, 81, 109, 165, 265, 431; and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 305-7.

<sup>3</sup> He also wrote the history of the Ghassānid wanderings in Arabia along biblical lines; see the section on Wahb in the chapter on the Arabic sources in *BASIC II*.

<sup>4</sup> *Kitāb al-Tījān*, 293.

<sup>5</sup> For Jid' see *ibid.*, 293-96. Another proverb, "Evil can be met only with evil," is associated with him, and some verses are ascribed to him, for which see *ibid.*, 298.

<sup>6</sup> For the occurrence of this segment of the Ghassānid pedigree in the *Dīwāns* of the two poets, see *BASIC II*.



settlement of the Azd in Medina, a place with which he is more associated than with Shām/Oriens and Byzantium. He appears as the ancestor of Azd Ghassān of Medina.<sup>7</sup>

4. In this source, accounts of *foedera* between Ghassān and Byzantium are of some importance. They are mentioned many times, but the accounts are confused. (a) In the first, there is a reference to the "covenant of Jesus" which Qaysar (Caesar) extended to Ghassān;<sup>8</sup> (b) in a second, the Ghassānids ask Caesar for the "covenant of Abraham and Isaac";<sup>9</sup> (c) in a third, the most important, there is reference to the *annona*. This sounds authentic, since the chances are that the Ghassānids did receive the *annona foederatica*, as argued above. The *Kitāb al-Tijān* uses the term *tu'ma* for it, apparently a literal calque of οἴησις.<sup>10</sup>

5. Finally, the account contains toponyms and some poetry associated with them. These are valuable additions to our knowledge of this early phase of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, if the toponyms can be identified and the verses proved to be authentic. The places are Wādī al-Kiswa; Bālī'a, which the author says is in the Balqā' in Trans-Jordan; Marj al-Zibā'; and Wādī al-Muḥaffaf.<sup>11</sup> Two of these toponyms occur in verses ascribed to Ghassānids, namely, Bālī'a and al-Muḥaffaf.<sup>12</sup> The verses associated with the latter may be added to the cycle of poems on the fall of the Salihids.

## APPENDIX II

### Munḍir's Invasion of Palestine

Related to the date of Munḍir's invasion of Palestine is the question of whether Munḍir succeeded his father Nu'mān immediately or after an interregnum by a certain Abū Ya'fur during 503–505. G. Rothstein<sup>1</sup> adopted the latter view but subsequently modified his position when he came to consider Munḍir's invasion of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> Joshua records the death of Nu'mān in his *Chronicle* but does not refer to Munḍir,

<sup>7</sup> This may be a confusion on Wahb's part of Arethas/Ḥārith, the Ghassānid king and phylarch of Oriens, with Ḥāritha, the Azdite chief of Medina.

<sup>8</sup> *Kitāb al-Tijān*, 294. This may be a vague and confused echo of the clause in the treaty on the adoption of Christianity by Ghassān in an early phase of their relations with Byzantium. The Byzantine *basileus* is normally referred to in the Arabic sources as Caesar (Qaysar, Ḳaysar); see the present writer in *EL*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. Ḳaysar.

<sup>9</sup> *Kitāb al-Tijān*, 296. This recalls what Ya'qūbī says in his chapter on the religion of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, where he states that a portion of Balḥārith of Najrān and of Ghassān adopted Judaism; see *Tārīkh*, I, 257.

<sup>10</sup> On how another Semitic language, Syriac, tried to translate ῥόγα, οἴησις, *annona*, see Shahīd, *Martyrs*, 101–3.

<sup>11</sup> For these toponyms see *Kitāb al-Tijān*, 295, 297, 298. Bālī'a is the only one given some geographical precision, as being located in the Balqā' in Trans-Jordan. The others are not easy to identify, especially the last and most important, al-Muḥaffaf. Besides, this toponym is associated with 'Amr ibn-Jafna and not with the house of Tha'laba (*ibid.*, 297); the account is thus somewhat confused. Marj al-Zibā' is identified with Yawm Ḥalīma, the celebrated Ghassānid battle of later times; *ibid.*, 297.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 297, 300.

<sup>1</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

saying merely that after Nu'mān's death Kawad "set up a king in place of Na'mān."<sup>3</sup> This may have been a temporary appointment, possibly involving Abū Ya'fur, since Kawad was busy preparing for the siege of Edessa, as is clear from the words of the *Chronicle* that after setting up the king he "arose and went to battle." This Abū Ya'fur may have been in charge of the Lakhmid army during this emergency, but apparently Muṣṣab, the legitimate son of Nu'mān, gave short shrift to his rule in Ḥīra, since he appears firmly in the Lakhmid saddle and mounting an invasion against Palestine shortly after the fall of Amida.<sup>4</sup>

An alternative dating of Muṣṣab's invasion must, however, be discussed. In §5 of his *Vita* of John Hesychastes,<sup>5</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis mentions that St. Sabas, after his return from Nicopolis, went over to the desert of Rouba where the Hesychast had decided to stay, not taking refuge in some more fortified place as protection against the invasion of Muṣṣab and his Saracens. Sabas succeeded in convincing him to move to the Great Lavra, at a time dated by the hagiographer to the second indiction, the 56th year of Hesychastes' life. This 56th year extended from 8 January 509 to 7 January 510.<sup>6</sup> According to this calculation, the invasion would have taken place during this period.<sup>7</sup>

This dating for the invasion is possible but subject to the following doubts.

1. Such a dating would place it during the seven years' truce between Byzantium and Persia which was observed scrupulously by the two parties, so much so that the Arab chiefs on both the Roman and the Persian sides were put to death for violating it.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore unlikely that Kawad would have tolerated so flagrant a flouting of the truce in 509 by his vassal.

2. Cyril states that Muṣṣab's invasion took place after he was made king over the Persian Arabs, in language that suggests that it occurred shortly after he was thus honored.<sup>9</sup> If this kingship and the invasion happened in 509, this would give him a reign of forty-five years, in contradiction to Hishām who gives him forty-nine years

<sup>3</sup> *Chronicle*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> That Ḥīra had a secular ruler by the name of Abū Ya'fur about this time is attested by the fact that Philoxenus of Mabbūg wrote to him; his name appears in the title of a Syriac document, for which see BASIC I.2, 702–7. This interregnum in the history of the Lakhmids and Ḥīra should not be confused with another one in the 520s, the Kinda interregnum, for which see "Ghassān and Byzantium," 253–54.

<sup>5</sup> *Kyrillos*, 212.

<sup>6</sup> Cyril's data are also internally inconsistent; since 509 was a third indiction, the second indiction would have been 508. The most recent annotator of Cyril has noted many inaccuracies in his dating; see *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, trans. R. M. Price, annotated by J. Binns, (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1991), p. 89 note 75, p. 217 note 111, p. 244 note 20.

<sup>7</sup> As calculated by A. J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1961–65), III.3, 24 note 49. If John's 56th year spanned 8 Jan. 509 to 7 Jan. 510, and the second indiction began 1 Sept. 508 (running to 31 August 509), the invasion would thus be dated to between 8 Jan. and 31 Aug. 509.

<sup>8</sup> On this see the section "The Persian War," above.

<sup>9</sup> *Kyrillos*, p. 211, lines 15–17: βασιλεύως ἀξίωμα . . . εἰληφώς, ἐπῆλθεν τῆι τε Ἀραβία καὶ Παλαιστίνη.

and to Procopius who gives him fifty.<sup>10</sup> Since Mundir was killed in 554, his reign must have begun earlier than 509.

3. Cyril expressly says that the invasion took place after the fall of Amida, which occurred in January 503. It is unnatural to date the invasion by relating it to an event six whole years after. Since the hagiographer seems well informed about the Persian war, it would have been more natural for him to report an invasion during the truce of 509 in relation to that fact.

As Cyril was writing in the mid-sixth century, he may have made a mistake about Hesychastes' age. Perhaps the ἑκτόν in the text is an error for some other number, for example, giving fifty instead of fifty-six, which would bring the date of the story closer<sup>11</sup> to the fall of Amida in 503. Or perhaps his "second indiction" is in error: the second indiction preceding 508 would have been 493, much too early.

### APPENDIX III

#### An "Indian" Elephant in Gaza

The entry for the year 496 in the *Chronicon* of Marcellinus Comes speaks of a gift sent by "India" to Emperor Anastasius, which consisted of an elephant (referred to by the poet Plautus as *lucabum*), and two giraffes: "India Anastasio principi elephantum, quem Plautus poeta nostra lucabum nomine dicit, duasque camelopardalas pro munere misit."<sup>1</sup>

#### A

In a recently published communication, Stanley M. Burstein has rightly argued that the gift must have been a royal one sent from one ruler to another and that "the giraffes guarantee an African location for India."<sup>2</sup> He further argued that the one who sent the gift was the ruler of Axum and that the gift represented a diplomatic overture on his part for Byzantine assistance against Ḥimyar in Arabia. Both conclusions are questionable. Although the tropical animals came *originally* from an African habitat, namely, Ethiopia, they could easily have come as a gift to Anastasius from the ruler of South Arabia.

In support of this contention the following may be advanced: (1) "India," that vague geographical term that appears in Byzantine chronicles, was also applicable to South Arabia. (2) South Arabia was in close touch with Ethiopia and could easily have imported these exotic animals; an African elephant is certainly attested in South Arabia in the following century, the one associated with Abraha's campaign against Mecca documented in the Koran.<sup>3</sup> (3) There was a precedent for Ḥimyarite-Byzantine

<sup>10</sup> For Hishām see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 169–70. For Procopius see *History*, I.xvii.40.

<sup>11</sup> And closer to Procopius' estimate of Mundir's reign as lasting fifty years.

<sup>1</sup> *Chronicon*, in *Chronica Minora Saecula IV–VII*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH, Sec. 1, vol. 11 (Berlin, 1894), 94.

<sup>2</sup> See "An Elephant for Anastasius: A Note on P. Mich. inv. 4290," *Ancient History Bulletin* 6.2 (1992), esp. 56 note 6.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter (*sura*) 105.

exchange of gifts when another exotic animal, the ape Pan, was sent in the fourth century to Constantius, and it has been argued by the present writer that the other ruler in this case was that of South Arabia rather than Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup> (4) Diplomatic contact between Byzantium and South Arabia in the reign of Anastasius is well established, reflected by the dispatch of a Byzantine bishop to Ḥimyar, namely, Silvanus.<sup>5</sup> (5) The fact that the animals appeared in Ayla in Palaestina Tertia, rather than Clysma in Egypt, suggests that the elephant, if it traveled by land, must have come from South Arabia, not Ethiopia.

## B

More important than the identity of the ruler and the country that sent the animals is a question raised by the reference in the work of Timotheos of Gaza to these animals. That naturalist says in his book "On Animals"<sup>6</sup> that he saw the three animals in his native Gaza, brought there by a man from Ayla, to Emperor Anastasius: ὅτι-διὰ Γάζης παρῆλθε τις ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰνδικῶν, Ἀελίσιος δὲ τὸ γένος, ἄγων δύο καμηλοπαρδάλεις καὶ ἐλέφαντα τῷ Βασιλεῖ Ἀναστασίῳ.<sup>7</sup>

The statement in Timotheos is a valuable contemporary authentication of the entry in Marcellinus Comes, and it provides interesting details on a segment of the long route of the animals from India to Constantinople. It documents the journey on the segment from Ayla to Gaza and specifies that a man from Ayla escorted the animals during their journey in Sinai and the Negev.

The relevance of the data provided by Timotheos of Gaza to Arab-Byzantine relations consists in the identity of the "man from Ayla" who brought the animals thence to Gaza. Could he have been an Arab, and if so what Arab, a Rhomaic Arab from Ayla or a Saracen, a federate Arab, a phylarch? In support of the Arab identity of the "man from Ayla," the following observations may be made.

1. The phrase in Timotheos that describes the escort is: Ἀελίσιος δὲ τὸ γένος. Τὸ γένος cannot mean literally "by race" and must mean "hail from Ayla"<sup>8</sup> since Aylans were not a race. Ayla was an Arab city in an exclusively Arab area, and so the Aylan must have been an Arab. He could have been a Rhomaic Arab from Ayla, but, as will be seen presently, he is more likely to have been a federate Arab.

<sup>4</sup> On Pan, see *BAFOC*, 105–6.

<sup>5</sup> See *BAFIC*, 377–81.

<sup>6</sup> See "Excerpta ex Timothei Gazaei Libris de Animalibus," ed. M. Haupt, *Hermes* 3 (1869), 1–30.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15, lines 8–10.

<sup>8</sup> As correctly understood by the translators of and commentators on Timotheos; see F. S. Bodenheimer and A. Rabinowitz, *Timotheos of Gaza on Animals, ΠΕΡΙ ΖΩΩΝ*, Académie internationale d'histoire des sciences (Leiden, 1949), p. 31, line 5. Their translation of τις ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τῶν Ἰνδικῶν as "a man dealing in Indian products" must be correct; but not so is their note 3 on the same page that it could be translated "a man (coming) from India." The animals were probably escorted by Ḥimyarites or Ethiopians until they reached Byzantine territory in Ayla, Palaestina Tertia, when they were taken over by others, either *Rhomaioi* or Arab *foederati*, as has been suggested in this Appendix.

2. The route from Ayla to Gaza was a long one; both climate and terrain were harsh and difficult. But the Arabs, native to the area and used to traversing it, were familiar with its difficult terrain and could tolerate the climate. Besides, it was a well-known segment of the longer route of the Arab traders, the *via odorifera* which started in South Arabia and bifurcated either at Ayla or Petra to Gaza<sup>9</sup> in the west and Bostra in the north.

3. When they were not fighting either the Persians, as part of the army of Oriens, or the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula who raided the *limes*, the Arab *foederati* would perform non- or paramilitary duties such as this one. As this was a royal gift, it was unlikely that it was left in the hands of a private Arab or Saracen, but must have been entrusted to Arabs in the service of Byzantium officially, such as the *foederati* were.

4. The environs of Ayla are specifically referred to a century or so later in a pre-Islamic poem as falling within the jurisdiction of the Ghassānid phylarchs.<sup>10</sup> The jurisdiction of the phylarchs of the federates in 496, when the elephant hove into sight in Ayla, must have also been in the region of Ayla. This is the period during which Leo conferred the phylarchate of Palaestina Tertia, to which Ayla belonged, on Amorkesos,<sup>11</sup> the adventurous Arab phylarch, and the Arab federates were still strongly represented in this region and in the island of Iotabe before *dux* Romanus around 500 dislodged them from that island and beat back the Arab raiders of the *limes*.<sup>12</sup> So presumably these federate Arabs were those of Amorkesos.

5. That Saracens ran errands in the Sinai and Negev is fully attested in the Nessana papyri, notably in two of them. In one,<sup>13</sup> the bishop of Ayla itself sends a letter to a resident of Nessana through a Saracen; in the other,<sup>14</sup> also from Ayla, the Saracens are mentioned four times and the term "escort" is applied to one of them. So there is documentary evidence that Saracens were used in this region as messengers and escorts.

6. In the case of the Saracens mentioned in the papyri, private and personal matters were involved. The indefiniteness of the reference to the Saracens, left unnamed, implies that they were pastoralists that roamed the region. But the case of the

<sup>9</sup> Παρήλαθε in the passage in Timotheos could imply that "the man from Ayla" may have terminated his escort service at a point farther on than Gaza. But παρέχομαι can also mean "pass on and come to a place, arrive at." For the route from Ayla to Gaza across Sinai and Negev, see B. Isaac, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1990), map 4; see also Y. Aharoni, "The Roman Road to Ayla (Elath)," *Israel Exploration Journal* 4 (1954), 9–16.

<sup>10</sup> On this see below, 624–26.

<sup>11</sup> See *BAFIC*, 59–113.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–31.

<sup>13</sup> See C. J. Kraemer, Jr., *Excavations at Nessana* (Princeton, 1958), III, no. 51.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 89, pp. 251–60. When the editor speaks of an Arab escort, p. 257, translating lines 23–24 on p. 256, he did so with some latitude in rendering Greek τὸ Σαρακιανὸ τὸ σικοφαντέσαντι. He obviously had difficulty in translating σικοφαντέσαντι (more correctly with an *upsilon*), which means "to blackmail, bring false charges," not "to escort." On p. 253 he explains the constraint under which he decided to translate the Greek term "escort:" "the escort may not have been necessary so much to lead the way as to guarantee safe passage to the holy mountain."

three animals was different since they were a gift to the emperor, involving official business at the highest level that could not have been entrusted to roaming nomads. The chances, then, are that they were entrusted to Saracens who were *foederati* employed by Byzantium for transacting official business. The sources provide data that illuminate the case of escorting this royal gift. When the relics of St. Anastasius the Persian were being translated from Persia to Jerusalem in 631, they were entrusted to the Saracen phylarch who escorted them along a segment of the route, the desert region that ran from the Euphrates to Palmyra,<sup>15</sup> in much the same way that the "man from Ayla" escorted the three animals along the segment of the route that ran from Ayla to Gaza or thereabouts.

Thus it is possible, even probable, that "the man from Ayla" was an Arab phylarch. But Timotheos of Gaza must have been speaking loosely when he said that the escort consisted of *a* man from Ayla. Surely one man could not have escorted an elephant and two giraffes along that long route. A group undertook that task probably under the direction of a federate phylarch. Timotheos of Gaza must have been referring to the one who led the group, when he spoke of the escort in the singular, "a man from Ayla."

<sup>15</sup> See below, 649–51.

## II

### The Reign of Justin I (518–527)

The sources for the reign of Justin I present a curious picture: the two *foederati* of Byzantium, Kinda and Ghassān, seem to disappear from their accounts, and instead the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, Persia's Arab allies, under their king Muḍir, occupy the stage of Arab-Byzantine relations. This is reflected in works on the reign, including the most detailed account of it written by a pioneer of the theme of Byzantium and the Arabs.<sup>1</sup>

However, this lacuna in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations has been filled by the discovery of new manuscripts<sup>2</sup> which now make it possible to flesh out the account of our subject during this reign. They provide significant details that substantially contribute to understanding why the Ghassānids disappear from the sources for the reign of Justin. As a result, the history of the Ghassānids reveals an important cultural dimension that was to attend it throughout the sixth century. The Arabic sources also shed light on events in the Arabian Peninsula involving both Byzantium and the Ghassānids<sup>3</sup> that had far-reaching consequences. All this makes Justin's reign more important than previously thought.

#### I. THE GHASSĀNIDS

The silence of the sources on the Ghassānids during Justin's reign needs to be accounted for. As the decade or so before his accession was a period of peace, when there would have been no occasion to mention the *foederati*, their silence for this earlier period is understandable. The reign of Justin, however, witnessed the outbreak of a Persian war and continual campaigning by Muḍir. Since the *foedus* of 502 the Ghassānids had emerged as the principal *foederati* of Byzantium, with one of their chief duties as specified in a clause of the treaty

<sup>1</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, DOS 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1950), 274–83 on the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids. Only two paragraphs (pp. 274–75), not dealing with the reign of Justin, cover the Ghassānids.

<sup>2</sup> See the present writer in *The Martyrs of Najrān* (Brussels, 1971) (hereafter *Martyrs*), which describes the Syriac and Arabic manuscripts.

<sup>3</sup> Namely, the persecutions and martyrdoms in South Arabia, and the Ghassānid support of Medina's Arabs against its Jewish tribes, to be dated to this reign. The impact of both events on Arabian history and Arab-Byzantine relations will be further discussed in *BASIC II*.



being to provide military aid to Byzantium in repelling Arab raiders from the Peninsula outside the *limes*. The sources, though, say nothing about their whereabouts and participation, making them as it were conspicuous by their absence.

The discovery of a new document,<sup>4</sup> a letter written by the Monophysite cleric Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, provides the key to this puzzling silence. In July 519 Simeon came to the military camp of Jabala the Ghassānid, invoking his help for the persecuted Arabs of Najrān and the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia. Two parts of this document (known as Letter G) are particularly relevant.

1. The *explicit*: "We have written this letter to you, your Fatherhood, from the camp of Gbala (Jabala) king of the Ḥ<sup>ʿ</sup>*Asny* (Ghassānids) at the place called *Gbyta* (al-Jābiya), in the month of Tammūz (July) of this year, eight hundred and thirty of *Alq̄sandr* (Alexander)."<sup>5</sup>

2. Part of the exhortation at the end, addressed by Simeon to his fellow Monophysites:

For if the barbarians have become inmates (in the household) of Christ and have abandoned their gold and silver and everything they possessed, and if women also have persevered heroically in their contests for the sake of Christ, how much more ought we to abandon (both our) wretched sheds and opulent residences and be with Christ in the fair mansions which are prepared for us in our Father's dwelling. Let not the old man (say) "I have grown old and weak and am unable to go from one place (to another)"; but let him consider how (marching out) with Christ is better for him than Christ's (departing) from his abode (while he tarries behind), alone (in his fortified camp) enjoying a borrowed and meager existence.<sup>6</sup>

These two passages provide much information on the Ghassānids during the reign of Justin.<sup>7</sup> They break the sources' prevailing silence on the Ghassānids between 502/3 (the time of the treaty and the Ḥīra campaign) and the end of Justin's reign. They are securely attested here as *foederati* of Byzantium early in the reign, their being such no longer having to be inferred from references on either side. This document, discovered after Vasiliev's work, not only establishes their federate presence early in Justin's reign but also places their whereabouts in al-Jābiya in the Gaulanitis, deep within the *limes*.

The other standard sources, mainly ecclesiastical histories, provide data

<sup>4</sup> Above, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Martyrs*, 63; Seleucid Era 830 = A.D. 519.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–63.

<sup>7</sup> *Martyrs*, 98–104, 109–10.



that help to explain why the Ghassānids become less visible in Byzantine accounts. The historians describe Justin's new ecclesiastical policy upon his accession, one of persecution of Monophysites (reversing Anastasius' pro-Monophysite position) with intent to lead the Byzantine state back to the Chalcedonian fold.<sup>8</sup> This severe policy was carried out by expulsion of the Monophysite bishops of Oriens from their sees.<sup>9</sup> This, then, is the background of the Ghassānids' non-visibility. They, being zealous Monophysites, simply withdrew, possibly even mutinied, from Byzantine service, not returning until the last year of Justin's reign and the first year of that of Justinian, when there was a relaxation of official anti-Monophysite policy in the empire.<sup>10</sup> This assertion is supported by the following.

1. The Ghassānids were staunch and uncompromising Monophysites, with a deep and genuine attachment to their doctrinal confession. We know that later, around 540, the federate king Arethas saved the Monophysite movement by having Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore appointed bishops.<sup>11</sup> Thus it can be seen that the Ghassānid involvement in Monophysitism was not just one of personal piety but also extended to a pervasive concern for Monophysite ecclesiastical structure. Accordingly, when Justin tried to dismantle that very structure, the Ghassānids reacted as good Monophysites, since what was true of Arethas was also true of his father, Jabala, who had the zeal of a Monophysite convert. Though the Ghassānids were not theologians, they had the piety of "soldiers of the cross" and loyalty to their clergy, a form of Arabic *walā'* and *wafā'* transferred from the secular to the religious sphere.<sup>12</sup> That Justin's new official Chalcedonianism brought with it persecution of Monophysite clergy could only have intensified the Ghassānids' sense of outrage.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On Justin's religious policy, see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 132–253; on the persecutions of the Monophysites, *ibid.*, 221–41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Vasiliev discerned three phases in the persecutions (pp. 221–24). It is noteworthy that Paul, the patriarch of Antioch who replaced Severus in 519, harassed the Monophysites in the Provincia Arabia (Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1205). Since this province was the headquarters of the Ghassānids, they must have been particularly affected by persecution of Monophysites in their own area.

<sup>10</sup> The withdrawal of the Ghassānids from the service of Byzantium is indirectly referred to by Procopius in *History*, I.xvii.42. In discussing Mundir's raids on the Roman *limes* before Arethas' appointment to the extraordinary *Basileia*, i.e., in the reign of Justin, he says that Mundir "was confronted by no one at all." I have dwelt on this point, the Ghassānids' withdrawal, both because of its cultural importance and because of its more cursory treatment in *Martyrs*, which led Sartre (*TE*, 165–66) to discount the possibility.

<sup>11</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 755–60.

<sup>12</sup> See *BAFOC*, 560.

<sup>13</sup> For the severe measures taken against the Monophysites, including the deposition and exile of some fifty-four bishops, see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 225–41. Compare in the 4th century the reaction of Moses, bishop of the Arabs, to the persecutions by the Arian Valens against the

2. One may also adduce a later analogy. In the reign of Justin II the Ghassānids withdrew from Byzantine service while the Lakhmids devastated the frontier. This later withdrawal, it is true, was motivated by anger at the treachery of the imperial government when it tried to arrest the federate king Muḏīr. That very treachery, however, was itself grounded in the antipathy of Orthodox Byzantium, especially in the capital and the Patriarchate of Antioch, toward the Monophysitism so passionately championed by the Ghassānid king and his *foederati*. The same was the case with Muḏīr's son Nu'mān, whose loyalty to the Monophysite movement and refusal to convert to Dyophysitism, evinced in his reply to Maurice, display the steadfast Monophysite conviction of the Ghassānid army. We may infer that the strand of loyalty ran back from Nu'mān to Muḏīr to the latter's father Arethas and grandfather Jabala as early as the reign of Justin I.<sup>14</sup>

3. Of these two points, the first is an inference and the second an analogy. In addition, a piece of textual evidence explicitly reflects the Ghassānids' loyalty to Monophysitism and their consequent withdrawal from Byzantine service. It comes from the Arabic *Tārīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal* of the Monophysite (and hence knowledgeable) Bar-Hebraeus, where, in writing on the reign of Justin, he says: "The cause of the *fitnah* (discord, dissension; sedition, riot) between the Arabs and the Rūm (Romans) was the persecution by King Justinianus (Justin) of the Fathers who believed in the One Nature, because the Arabs at that time followed the Jacobite confession and nothing else."<sup>15</sup> Significantly, the writer uses the term *fitnah*, suggesting that the difference between Byzantium and her *foederati* may have been physically violent: the

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orthodox: *BAFOC*, 154. The revolt of Queen Mavia's orthodox Arab *foederati* against Valens is a good parallel. While the 4th-century revolt was violent, the 6th-century Ghassānid withdrawal seems to have been for the most part peaceful; see *BAFOC*, 138–202.

<sup>14</sup> For troubled relations during the reigns of Muḏīr and Nu'mān, see below, 455–78, 529–38. An analogous case in the same decade is the Lakhmids' withdrawal from Persian service under Muḏīr, for the same reason, religion. When Kawad asked his vassal Muḏīr to adopt his own profession of Mazdakism, the Lakhmid king left his service; see below, 44–46.

<sup>15</sup> Bar-Hebraeus, *Tārīkh Mukhtaṣar al-Duwal*, ed. A. Ṣālḥānī (Beirut, 1890, repr. 1908), 87. In Arabic, Justin is often confused with Justinian, but clearly in this text "Justinianus" means Justin I, since the reign of Justinian does not begin until the next section. The Monophysite writer, from a much later date, exaggerates in saying that Monophysitism was the doctrinal confession of all the Christian Arabs of that time. The editor of Bar-Hebraeus' *Mukhtaṣar*, however, errs in commenting on the passage about the Ghassānid *fitnah*. In the first footnote he confuses the Lakhmids with the Ghassānids. The passage about the *fitnah* is independent of the preceding sentence, referring to peace negotiations between Byzantium and Muḏīr. Indeed, the paragraph in which the quote from Bar-Hebraeus occurs consists of unrelated sentences. The editor is also mistaken in his second footnote in stating that the Christian martyrs of Najrān were "Catholic," i.e., Chalcedonians, since in fact they were Monophysites. Vasiliev was unaware of the Ghassānid withdrawal and the *fitnah* when he wrote, concerning the edict of 519/20 requiring orthodoxy of soldiers, that "our sources make no mention of any revolts in the army on account of the new religious policy" (*Justin*, 233).

Ghassānids may have not simply withdrawn but mutinied, as they did in the 570s and 580s for roughly the same reasons.<sup>16</sup> Both the Bar-Hebraeus passage and the exhortation in Simeon's letter,<sup>17</sup> the latter dating to Justin I's reign, support a Ghassānid withdrawal. Though the letter was a call for help to the Ghassānids against the ruler of South Arabia, its passionate tone, urging Jabala to forgo his *annona* and fight for Monophysitism, embodies a desire that Jabala withdraw from service to the "evil empire" of the Chalcedonian Justin.

4. Among the bishops exiled by Justin in 519<sup>18</sup> there were probably Rhomaic Arab bishops, though individuals' identities as such are hard to ascertain since the Rhomaic Arabs had, in becoming assimilated, adopted Christian and/or Graeco-Roman names that concealed their Arab ethnicity.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the Latin translation of a Syriac chronicle refers to one bishop as "Iohannes episcopus Zizae Arabum τῶν Hawarin exiit et mortuus est in exilio Harlan in agro Damasceno."<sup>20</sup> It is certain from the use of the term *Ṭayyāyē* for "Arabs" in the Syriac description of this bishop, John, that these were not *Rbomaioi*. Since the case for their being a federate group is strong, and the bishop was of course a Monophysite, one is led to think of the Ghassānids, both federates and Monophysites. This bishop's exile would have affected them strongly, alienating them even further from the Chalcedonian empire.

Finally, one must draw attention to Justin's edict of 519/20 prescribing that all soldiers must adhere to Chalcedon or lose their rations and other privileges.<sup>21</sup> Whether this applied to the *foederati* of the East is not clear,<sup>22</sup> but if it did, it would have forced the Ghassānids to withdraw from imperial service. The date of their withdrawal is not fixed, but it had not yet occurred by July 519 when Simeon found them encamped in al-Jābiya.

## II. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE GHASSĀNIDS

The Ghassānids' withdrawal from Byzantine service early in the reign of Justin I raises a number of problems, including that of how long they withdrew and to where, and of what they did in the interim.

1. Though there is no fixed terminus at either end, July 519 is a terminus post quem,<sup>23</sup> while the battle of Thannūris in 528, when their king

<sup>16</sup> Much depends on the correct nuance imparted by the author to the word *fitnah*.

<sup>17</sup> See above, and the commentary on the exhortation in *Martyrs*, 98–104.

<sup>18</sup> For the list of exiled bishops, see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 226 and note 163 with bibliography.

<sup>19</sup> For Arab bishops in conciliar lists of the 5th century who were *Rbomaioi*, see *BAFIC*, 555.

<sup>20</sup> On this bishop, see *BASIC* I.2, 712–22. On positing his identity with John the Arab to whom Philoxenus wrote, see *ibid.*, 695.

<sup>21</sup> Vasiliev, *Justin*, 242.

<sup>22</sup> Vasiliev thinks it did not; *ibid.*, 243–44.

<sup>23</sup> *Martyrs*, 63. The *explicit* of Simeon's letter expressly gives the Seleucid Era equivalent of

Aṭfar/Jabala died, may serve as a *terminus ante quem*.<sup>24</sup> Thus they were out of Byzantine service for the better part of Justin's reign.

2. They had only one region to retire to, namely, east of the *limes* in the Arabian Peninsula, a natural area of refuge for them as seen in the case of the later withdrawal of Mundir the Ghassānid to the desert during the reign of Justin II, by way of parallel. Zacharia Scholasticus also mentions the desert as the region to which some of the persecuted Monophysites of Oriens also fled.<sup>25</sup> As the Ghassānids were settled mainly in the Provincia Arabia, it is practically certain that they withdrew to the region east of it, through Wādī Sirḥān, and to the northern Ḥijāz whence they had originated before coming into contact with Byzantium.

3. No doubt they played host to many of the ecclesiastics who had taken refuge in the same area. This role of protectors to persecuted Monophysite ecclesiastics was always the role of the staunchly Monophysite Ghassānids.<sup>26</sup> Zacharia describes how the exiles lived in a desert in the north of Oriens.

And so the desert was at peace, and was abundantly supplied with a population of believers who lived in it, and fresh ones who were every day added to them and aided in swelling the numbers of their brethren, some from a desire to visit their brethren out of Christian love, and others again because they were being driven from country to country by the bishops in the cities. And there grew up, as it were, a commonwealth of illustrious and believing priests, and a tranquil brotherhood with them; and they were united in love and abounded in mutual affection, and they were beloved and acceptable in the sight of everyone; and nothing was lacking, for the honoured heads of the corporation, which is composed of all the members of the body, accompanied them, the pious John of Constantia, a religious and ascetic man, (he would not even partake of the desirable bread, "the foundation of the life of man," and so he progressed in the reading of the Scriptures and became a gnostic and a theoretic; for he used to raise his understanding upwards by the study of spiritual things for the space of three hours, marvelling and meditating

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A.D. 519 (above, note 5). I have followed the *explicit* in dating Simeon's visit to Jabala to 519. However, both the inception of the Ḥimyaritic Era and the date of the South Arabian persecution are still hotly debated among Sabaicists. Should certainty be attained, it may affect the date of Simeon's visit.

<sup>24</sup> On this battle see below, 76–79.

<sup>25</sup> Zacharia Scholasticus, *HE*, trans. Brooks, p. 55, lines 25–30. This desert is somewhere in the north of Oriens. Some of Zacharia's localities defy identification: see F. J. Hamilton and E. W. Brooks, trans., *The Syriac Chronicle Known as That of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London, 1899), 210 note 7.

<sup>26</sup> As they did to Patriarch Paul the Black during the reigns of Arethas and Mundir: see BASIC I.2, 801–5.

on the wisdom of the works of God; and for three hours more, from the sixth to the ninth, he continued in joy and peace with every man, in intercourse with those who came to him upon necessary business)—and Thomas of Dara again, while undergoing many labours, conversed much upon physics.<sup>27</sup>

Since Monophysite clerics who took refuge in the desert must have come to where the Ghassānids also had chosen to live, in the Arab area *stricto sensu*, this must have aided the spread of the Monophysite confession among the Arabs of the northern Ḥijāz. While the Ghassānids were in northern Arabia, their presence may have helped to promote Monophysitism locally.

4. The Ghassānids, removed from Byzantine service for a relatively long time, were primarily a military group; since they did not fight in Oriens through their Byzantine connection during this period, they found a new theater of military action in Ḥijāz. The Arabic sources credit them, as they reaffirmed their Peninsular connection, with extending aid against the Jewish tribes of Medina to its two Arab tribes, al-Aws and al-Khazraj.<sup>28</sup> The most likely date for this aid is the period of their exile in Ḥijāz during Justin's reign. Thus they affected the Arabs of Medina both by helping them militarily and by giving an impetus to the spread of Monophysite Christianity in the city, a matter of considerable importance in the light of the events of the seventh century and the rise of Islam.

5. The figure around whom Ghassānid history turns in this period is of course Jabala. In exile for most of Justin's reign, he now plays an important part in the history of Ḥijāz. He no doubt had his family with him, of whom two sons, Arethas and Abū Karib, are known to Procopius.<sup>29</sup> His sons come into prominence in Arab-Byzantine relations around 530, after their father's death at Thannūris in 528. This period of withdrawal sheds light on some problems of both sons' careers. Procopius states that Abū Karib ruled over Phoinikōn in northern Ḥijāz, and that after presenting it to Emperor Justinian he became the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia.<sup>30</sup> Before it was understood that the Ghassānids had withdrawn into the Peninsula, Abū Karib's presence outside the *limes* was puzzling. As the brother of Arethas and a member of the house of Jabala, he should have been within the *limes* as befitted the Ghassānid position of *foederati* after the treaty of 502. Now his position in Arabia is quite intelligible. The Ghassānids must have possessed themselves of Phoinikōn, or

<sup>27</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, p. 56, lines 10–28, describing the same desert; cf. above, note 25.

<sup>28</sup> See the section on Byzantium and Medina in *BASIC II*.

<sup>29</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47, xix.10–13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

at least reaffirmed their connection with it, while they were withdrawn from Byzantium. Phoinikōn is thus a toponymic indication of where they went;<sup>31</sup> possibly Abū Karib remained there after the Ghassānids reentered Byzantine service early in the reign of Justinian. This would make sense of Procopius' statement that after he handed Phoinikōn over to Justinian the emperor made him a phylarch. His more famous brother Arethas is said to have conducted a campaign against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar in the 560s.<sup>32</sup> His presence in the Ḥijāz during the period of withdrawal, when he could have had a brush with the Jewish settlers, could be related to this campaign, however remotely.

The Ghassānid withdrawal to northern Ḥijāz was thus a matter of some importance both to Arabian history and to Arab-Byzantine relations. The Ghassānids reaffirmed their Peninsular connections in Ḥijāz, which was in a sense the territory of the "Outer Shield"<sup>33</sup> for Byzantium and its sphere of influence in western Arabia.

#### Kinda

The Ghassānids were not the only *foederati* conspicuous by their absence from the sources during the reign of Justin I; the Kindites were also, which raises the question of their whereabouts during the reign. It has been argued that they were not Monophysites and hence would not, like the Ghassānids, have left the service of Byzantium on doctrinal grounds.

Though the silence of the sources makes it difficult to follow the fortunes of Byzantine-Kindite relations in this period, the following reconstruction is plausible. The Kindite Arethas ruled Ḥīra during what amounted to a Kindite interregnum in the history of that Lakhmid city. This interregnum has been variously dated, according to one view to the 520s,<sup>34</sup> possibly in the lull between the second and third phases of Lakhmid raids against Oriens,<sup>35</sup> which may have been due to Munḍir's having lost Ḥīra to Kindite control. If, and why, Arethas the Kindite left Byzantine service in the 520s is not clear: perhaps he was led on by Kawad's expulsion of Munḍir, to be attracted by the prospect of ruling Ḥīra. He did not last long, though, in the Persian king's employ, since a year after the death of Justin he appears again on the Byzantine scene as phylarch of Palestine.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Which Ḥijāzi oasis Phoinikōn was is not clear, but the chances are it was either Tabūk or Dūma. The Arabic sources attest to the Ghassānid presence at Dūma; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>32</sup> See below, 322–25.

<sup>33</sup> For this phrase, see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

<sup>34</sup> See "Ghassān and Byzantium," 253–54.

<sup>35</sup> On Munḍir's raids against Oriens see above, 17–19, and below, 42–48.

<sup>36</sup> See below, 69–71.



## III. THE CONFERENCE OF RAMLA

At some point during the reign of Justin I, Munḍir made his most successful raid into Byzantine territory, resulting in the capture of two Byzantine commanders, Timostratus, son of Silvanus, and John, son of Lucas. Justin sent his veteran diplomat Abraham, the father of Nonnosus, to negotiate with Munḍir for the release of the two Romans and to make peace with the Lakhmid king. Abraham met Munḍir at Ramla, a place southeast of Hīra, and secured the release of the two Byzantines. The conference of Ramla turned out to have an international dimension, involving South Arabia and its new ruler Yūsuf, the Judaizing king of Ḥimyar. One of the participants, Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, after hearing at Ramla accounts of the persecution and massacre of the Christians of South Arabia (particularly Najrān), became the apostle of a crusade against South Arabia that involved Ethiopia, the Ghassānids, and Byzantium.

A detailed examination of the accounts of the conference of Ramla was published by the present writer in the 1960s.<sup>37</sup> Since then both new documents have been discovered<sup>38</sup> and more has become known about relevant aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations. Accordingly, the present section will modify earlier discussions of this conference, beginning with chronology.

1. The chronology adopted in the earlier study followed the data of Simeon's first *Letter*, according to which Simeon and the Byzantine party led by Abraham met with Munḍir in Ramla in February 524, with the persecutions in South Arabia having taken place the preceding November 523. The *explicit* of Simeon's new *Letter*, however, implies that the persecutions took place in 518, and hence the conference is to be dated to February 519.

This contradiction has not been definitively resolved.<sup>39</sup> If the conference took place in 519, this locates Munḍir's raid on which he captured the two Byzantine commanders as part of the first phase of Lakhmid-Byzantine inter-

<sup>37</sup> See the present writer in "Byzantino-arabica: The Conference of Ramla, A.D. 524," *JNES* 23 (1964), 115-31 (hereafter "Conference of Ramla").

<sup>38</sup> Syriac and Arabic manuscripts described in *Martyrs* (above, note 2).

<sup>39</sup> For detailed arguments in support of the view that the persecutions took place in 518 and not 523, see *Martyrs*, 235-42. These were given by the present writer only in order to help Sabaicists reach a definitive conclusion about the inception of the Sabaean Era which is important for throwing light on the chronology of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin, especially the date of the conference of Ramla. The sources for the embassy, with the exception of the letter of Simeon, do not help in determining the date of the embassy.

Support for the year 518 as the year of the persecutions and martyrdoms in *Martyrs*, 235-42, was inspired by the fact that, as the editor of and commentator on the newly found letter of Simeon, I wanted this date to have a chance of being seriously considered. I have left it to Sabaicists to decide on the inception of the Sabaean Era and the chronology of the martyrdoms in South Arabia, both of which are still being debated. For the latest on this, see F. de Blois, "The Date of the Martyrs of Nagran," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1.2-3 (1990), 110-28, with references to the earlier articles of G. Huxley and P. Marrassini.

action, in the first two years of Justin's reign. If the original dating of the conference to 524 were upheld, this would place Mundir's raid in 523,<sup>40</sup> which would add a third phase, falling between the other two, to the known phases of Lakhmid-Byzantine relations.<sup>41</sup> This in turn would shorten the duration of the Kindite interregnum to some three years, either before or after 523, up to 527 when Mundir appears in the saddle again in Hira.

2. In the earlier study it was hypothesized<sup>42</sup> that prior to the conference of Ramla another conference had been held at Hira.

This possibility of an earlier Conference at Hira was entertained by the present writer in that article because he followed the generally accepted date, 524, for the dispatch of Simeon's *Letter S*, and this date excluded the participation of Shilas, the Nestorian Catholicus, in the Conference of Ramla held that year. The newly discovered *Letter G*, whose *explicit* is dated 519 and not 524, now raises the question of the dating of the Conference of Ramla and the conclusions reached in the above mentioned article on an earlier Conference at Hira. The close examination of the structure of Simeon's *Letter S* has also disclosed that he had dispatched his "preceding letter" not from Hira but from Ramla. It may now be safely assumed that there was only one Conference, not two; furthermore, the participation of the Nestorian Catholicus Shilas in the Conference of Ramla cannot now be excluded, since the Conference of Ramla might have been held earlier than 524.<sup>43</sup>

These are the two principal modifications. Details concerning the persons involved also remain to be discussed.

a. One of the two dukes captured by Mundir was John son of Lucas. It has been suggested<sup>44</sup> that perhaps he was *dux* or *comes rei militaris* associated, as was Timostratus, with either Osrhoene or Mesopotamia. Another suggestion, supported by further observations, is that he was the *dux* of Euphratensis.<sup>45</sup>

b. The other duke, Timostratus, is better known than John.<sup>46</sup> Zacharia's statement that he was a *stratēlatēs* presents a problem, since he was not a *magister militum*. Elsewhere, however, Zacharia describes him as *dux in limite*,<sup>47</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Severus of Antioch (patriarch 513–518) addressed a letter to Timostratus, attesting to him as *dux* in the East at that time; see *PLRE*, II, 1120.

<sup>41</sup> For Byzantine-Lakhmid relations in Justin's reign, see below, 42–48.

<sup>42</sup> "Conference of Ramla," 119–22.

<sup>43</sup> *Martyrs*, 120 note 3; see also *ibid.*, 113–31.

<sup>44</sup> *PLRE*, II, 611.

<sup>45</sup> "Conference of Ramla," 121 note 27, 122 note 29.

<sup>46</sup> *PLRE*, II, 1120.

<sup>47</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, 63. Further on *stratēlatēs*, see below, 174, 506.



which might suggest that a *ducatus limitis* might have been created in response to the Persian war situation, involving Osrhoene and Mesopotamia.

c. Isaac, presbyter and *apokrisiarios* of the Orthodox Christians in Persia: earlier thought attested only by the Latin translation of the metaphrastic version of the *Martyrium Arethae*.<sup>48</sup> However, a closer look at the Greek version also yields references to him.<sup>49</sup>

d. John Mandinos, the subdeacon: his name could argue for a Mandaean background. If this is the case, it would be one of the earliest references to the Mandaeans.<sup>50</sup>

e. Shilas the Nestorian Catholicus:<sup>51</sup> known to have died in 523; his earlier quasi-attestation at a conference dated to 524 presented a problem. With the conference redated to 519, his participation easily makes sense.

Though a conference that brought together so many participants might have included Byzantium's principal *foederati*, the Ghassānids, they do not appear in any accounts of it; perhaps they were not expected to do so.<sup>52</sup> The only reference to the Roman Arabs here does not pertain to them.<sup>53</sup>

#### IV. BYZANTINE-LAKHMID RELATIONS

The role of the Arabs in the Persian wars of Justin I's reign is due for a reexamination. Mundir's campaigns against Byzantine territory having been treated separately and episodically, their place in the history of Byzantine-Sasanid conflict has been obscured.<sup>54</sup> An examination of these campaigns will show that they are inseparable from Persian policy toward Byzantium and that they fall into two distinct phases.

<sup>48</sup> "Conference of Ramla," 116.

<sup>49</sup> PG 115(2), cols. 1277c, 1280b.

<sup>50</sup> I owe this observation to Prof. Franz Rosenthal.

<sup>51</sup> "Conference of Ramla," 117 note 8.

<sup>52</sup> This does not contradict previous remarks on the Ghassānid withdrawal, especially if the conference is dated to February 519; as late as July 519 the Ghassānids were still within the *limes* in the Gaulanitis, where Simeon found them.

<sup>53</sup> "Conference of Ramla," 120 note 28.

<sup>54</sup> Bury (*HLRE*, II, 79–80) omits any reference to Mundir's campaigns during the reign of Justin. Devresse (*PA*, 255, 258–59) knows of the campaign of 527, regarding this date as when Mundir became a threat to the empire. Stein (*HBE*, 265–66) conceives of the campaigns as private enterprises by Mundir who, in his view, was a sovereign king. Vasiliev (*Justin*, 255–74), though treating the campaigns separately, is aware of Mundir's relation to Kawad, and treats only the episodes of 523/24 and 527. B. Rubin (*Das Zeitalter Justinians*, I [Berlin, 1960], 272–73), though aware of the early campaign of 519, does not relate it to the designs of the Persian king, and treats Mundir's career separately in a chapter on the Arabs. Rothstein (*DLH*, 79–80) grasps the function of Mundir in the calculations of Kawad, but in this specialized work does not attempt an exhaustive treatment.

## A. The Two Phases

The Syriac *Chronicle of 724* dates the earliest of Munḍir's campaigns to 519: "Anno 830° ascendit Mundar prima vice."<sup>55</sup> The phrase *prima vice* implies at least one other campaign, as is recorded in the *Chronicle of Elias*, metropolitan of Nisibis, for 520: "Eo Mundhir rex Saracenorum in regionem Romanorum adscendit et a cuncta limitis regione captivos abduxit."<sup>56</sup> Two connected campaigns in two consecutive years afford a suitable military background for a diplomatic mission such as that described in Simeon's *Letter S*. A Greek source also refers to a Persian-Byzantine peace treaty,<sup>57</sup> assigning it to Justin's third regnal year, 520/21. This is possibly the very one that Abraham<sup>58</sup> concluded with Munḍir<sup>59</sup> against the background of the latter's two campaigns as related by the Syriac sources. If the calculation is correct, then Abraham would have visited Ramla early in 521, when he and Simeon would have heard about the South Arabian persecutions that had taken place in 520. The first phase<sup>60</sup> could thus be dated to 519/20.

The second phase may be dated to 527, when Munḍir invaded the vicinity of Emesa and Apamea and the district of Antioch and carried off many captives, including four hundred virgins whom he sacrificed to the pagan goddess al-ʿUzzā, the Arab Aphrodite. In the words of the contemporary source, Zacharia:<sup>61</sup>

Et Mandir rex Ṭayāyā ad agrum Emesenorum et Apamenorum, et χώρον Antiochae semel et bis adscendit, et multos abduxit et secum deportavit; et quadringentas virgines, quae de coetu Thomae apostoli Emesae captivae subito factae sunt, uno die in cultum ʿUzzay sacrificavit.

This date of 527 is not explicitly stated by Zacharia, whose chronology is not always clear. The date may, however, be deduced from the placement of this episode between the account of the great earthquake at Antioch of 526, in his preceding chapter, and that of the negotiations between Hypatius and Pharesmanes in 527, in his subsequent fifth chapter.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Chronicon Miscellaneum ad Annum Domini 724 pertinens*, ed. E. W. Brooks; trans. J. B. Chabot, CSCO (Paris, 1904), 111.

<sup>56</sup> Elias Nisibenus, *Opus Chronologicum*, ed. and trans. E. W. Brooks, CSCO (Louvain, 1954), 56.

<sup>57</sup> Cedrenus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn ed.), I, 638.

<sup>58</sup> For a commentary on the treaty recorded by Cedrenus, see *Martyrs*, 241 note 4.

<sup>59</sup> For this treaty negotiated by Abraham, the father of Nonnosus, see the section above on the conference of Ramla.

<sup>60</sup> Vasiliev missed these two offensives; Rubin was aware of at least the first: *Martyrs*, 242, Appendix.

<sup>61</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, 53. On the four hundred virgins, see *BASIC* I.2, 732–33.

<sup>62</sup> See also the last paragraph of the Appendix, *Martyrs*, 242.

Zacharia's text contains the odd phrase *semel et bis*, "once and twice"; this strange locution for *ter*, "thrice," suggests a corruption in the text where the author intended to say "the second time." In Syriac the phrase reads *zbantā w tartēn*, easily admitting of the emendation to *zbantā d' tartēn*, "the second time." This is palaeographically possible, since the Syriac *waw* could be mistaken by copyists for a *dalath*. Support for this emendation comes from a collation of this phrase with that used by Michael the Syrian in his record of the same campaign of Mundir: Michael uses *tūb*, meaning "for the second time."<sup>63</sup> Michael had apparently used a manuscript of Zacharia where the correct reading *zbantā d' tartēn* stood. It is not clear whether Mundir had invaded the same region of Emesa, Apamea, and Antioch the first time, or some other region such as Roman Mesopotamia between the Balih and the Khābūr.<sup>64</sup>

The seriousness of this second offensive in 527 is reflected in the fact that Justinian appointed Hypatius *magister militum per Orientem*<sup>65</sup> in order to protect Oriens from the ravages of the Saracens, in this case meaning Mundir's offensive of 527 as related by Zacharia and Michael the Syrian. The second phase thus witnessed two campaigns which, if they included Roman Mesopotamia, were far-ranging. It ran from 527 until the Endless Peace of 532 under Justinian.

### B. Their Context

These campaigns are not episodes separable from the general course of the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict during the reign of Justin. Earlier historiography has so presented them because Mundir was erroneously thought to be a sovereign ruler who could wage his own wars against Byzantium independently of the Persian king.<sup>66</sup> Examination of these campaigns in their two phases shows that they follow a certain pattern, that they were inspired by the Persian king, and that in them Mundir acted as a vassal of Kawad rather than as a sovereign ruler.

1. The first phase, 519/20: the dates are significant, falling as they do in the first two years of Justin's reign when the question of the annual subsidies to Persia came up. Cedrenus' testimony that Justin concluded peace with

<sup>63</sup> For the French version, with "de nouveau" rendering Syriac *tūb*, see *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1924), II, 178; for the Syriac *tūb*, see *ibid.*, 271, middle column, line 7.

<sup>64</sup> This depends on whether or not Michael the Syrian had this in mind when he wrote *tūb*, since the reference to Mundir's invasion of Mesopotamia occurs a few lines earlier in the same passage. This is not a fact, as in *Martyrs*, 242, second paragraph of the Appendix, but only a possibility.

<sup>65</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 423.

<sup>66</sup> Stein consistently advocated this view; see the present writer in "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561," *Arabica* 3 (1956), 198. Rubin (*Zeitalter Justinians*, 272) seems to follow Stein.

Kawad in 520 bears this out. The peace was made, not just with the Lakhmids, but with the Persians, showing that Mundir's campaigns were understood to be Persian military enterprises conducted through their vassal. Bar-Hebraeus understood them in the same way: writing of Justin's first two years and his refusal to pay the Persians the annual subsidies, he says of the Persian king that "he used from time to time to send his Arabs into the country of the *Rhomaye*, and they laid it waste and spoiled it."<sup>67</sup>

2. The second phase, 527: this shows the clearest relation between the campaigns of Mundir and the military designs of the Persians. A passage in Zacharia<sup>68</sup> reveals a sequence of military operations on both sides that shows clearly that Mundir was campaigning as a Persian vassal, and also testifies to Mundir's function in the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict. The historian clearly states that Kawad used from time to time to send his vassal Mundir to campaign against Byzantium whenever Justin refused to pay him the annual subsidy for the Caspian Gates. Mundir's campaign against the Khābūr-Balīḡ region was followed by a Roman counterattack directed not against Mundir but against Nisibis and Arzanene, possessions of the Persian king. The peace negotiations that followed were conducted not with the Lakhmids but with the Persians. On their failure, Mundir resumed his campaigns against the regions of Emesa, Apamea, and Antioch, and these in turn were followed by Byzantine retaliation not against him but against the Persian king in Nisibis and Thebetha.

### C

Thus these Lakhmid-Byzantine wars can easily be related to the general course of Byzantine-Persian relations. Technically the Lakhmid king was waging a war on his own, but in reality he was doing so as a Persian client-king and vassal: thus these wars were Persian wars as much as Lakhmid.<sup>69</sup> Mundir could conveniently express Persian displeasure against Byzantium without an official declaration of war between the two world powers or a treaty violation. There were two main causes of Persian displeasure: the annual Caspian Gates subsidies, and the collision of Byzantine and Persian interests in the Caucasus region, involving such episodes as those of Tzath the Lazic and Zilbig the Hun.<sup>70</sup> The remoteness of Mundir and his capital Hira from the Caucasus made his raids on Byzantine territory all the more convenient, since they

<sup>67</sup> See *The Chronography of Bar-Hebraeus*, trans. E. A. W. Budge (Oxford, 1932), 73.

<sup>68</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, 52–53.

<sup>69</sup> For further reflections on this point, see *Martyrs*, 241 note 4.

<sup>70</sup> On these two episodes see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 257–64 and 264–65 respectively. The second one reconciled the two powers, at least temporarily, as Kawad was impressed by Justin's sincerity.

would not have appeared related to Persia's dissatisfaction with Byzantine interference in their interests in the Caucasus.

The course of Lakhmid-Byzantine relations, however, runs somewhat curiously during Justin's reign. Lakhmid aggressiveness, which flared up at the beginning of the reign and toward its end, ceases in the middle period, for about seven years between 520 and 527, with a lacuna in the sources on Mundir's whereabouts. This was in spite of the fact that the course of Persian-Byzantine relations was not smooth, disturbed by a number of irritants.<sup>71</sup> Events in Hira, though, might account for Mundir's non-visibility amid uneasy relations between the two powers.

It has been argued<sup>72</sup> that it was in the 520s that the Kinda interregnum took place, when Mundir lost his throne and his privileged position with Kawad and fled his capital, to be replaced by Arethas, the Kindite chief with whom Byzantium had struck a *foedus* in 502.<sup>73</sup> The course of the Byzantine-Persian conflict during the reign of Justin further supports this view. One may additionally observe the following. (1) The very sources that refer to Mundir as attacking Byzantine territory earlier are silent on any campaigns by him during this time. In view of his function in Kawad's designs and his active role during Justin's reign, this silence is significant, most simply explainable by his having fallen on evil days and been expelled from his capital. (2) The sudden appearance of Hārith the Kindite as a phylarch of Palestine, someone not referred to at all in connection with Mundir's raids under Justin, argues that he was a recent arrival on the scene.<sup>74</sup> His age and his kingship over Kinda could argue that his phylarchate was a temporary measure, adopted to accommodate a chief who had been driven out of Hira.

## D

The Persian war of Justinian's reign has generally been regarded as having begun in 527, while the preceding military engagements have been treated as though they were separate episodes in the history of Byzantine-

<sup>71</sup> Such as the rejection of Kawad's request that Justin adopt his son Chosroes; on this *adoptio per arma* see *ibid.*, 265–68. Another cause of dissatisfaction was Justin's support of the Ethiopian expedition against South Arabia, which won that country to the Christian fold and hence to Byzantine influence; see the chapter on Byzantium and Arabia in *BASIC II*. Add to these the Tzath and Zilbig episodes.

<sup>72</sup> By Nöldeke, and followed by the present writer in "Ghassān and Byzantium," 253–54. Nöldeke tied his argument to the relation of Mundir, Kawad, and Chosroes to Mazdakism. See Rothstein, *DLH*, 89–92.

<sup>73</sup> Hence presumably he was not inclined to attack Byzantine territory, even if he had contracted friendly relations with the Persian king. His adoption of Mazdakism would not have been a strong enough motive for such an attack. He must also have been quite old by then.

<sup>74</sup> For this episode involving Arethas the Kindite and Diomedes, *dux* of Palestine, see Malalas, *Chronographia*, 434–35; also below, 69–71.

Lakhmid relations. The foregoing analysis has shown that the war really started as early as the first year of Justin's reign. Though it was not a full-scale war, nonetheless it reflects Kawad's intention to break the peace as early as 519. Mundir's ambiguous position in this conflict was invaluable for Kawad. Technically an ally of his, but in reality his vassal and dependent, Mundir could conveniently reflect his lord's displeasure by attacking Byzantine territory without committing his lord to a war with Byzantium or a breach of the peace.

Moving the beginning of the Persian war back from 527 to 519 gives a deeper background to the war of Justinian's reign. The changes in Justinian's first regnal year connected with the Persian war and the eastern front grew out of events in Justin's reign on which Justinian, the power behind the throne during the previous reign, had been reflecting. The whole preceding reign, and not just the events of 527 when the war broke out openly, had revealed for Justinian the weak features of the Byzantine military establishment in the Orient and the need for its restructuring.

This analysis will also make intelligible a statement in Malalas that has not been satisfactorily explained. The chronographer reflected that the Endless Peace of 532 ended a war of thirty-one years that had begun with the fall of Amida and the raids of the Arabs.<sup>75</sup> Though this duration had seemed exaggerated,<sup>76</sup> reinterpreting the role of the Lakhmid Arabs in the story of Persian-Byzantine relations will give it more credibility. The thirty-one-year duration can be divided as follows. The period 506–513 was a truce, not a peace; military operations were temporarily suspended. The period 513–519 was a continuation of the previous period, but with the two empires technically in a state of war, since the treaty lapsed in 513 and was not renewed. Now the span 519–527 can be seen as a period of continued hostilities between the two empires, thus filling the lacuna. Then 527–532 was the period of the first Persian war of Justinian's reign.

Malalas' other point concerned the Arab raids during the reign of Anastasius: the assault by the Lakhmid Nu'mān, Mundir's father, against Byzantium, and those also of Kinda and Ghassān around 500. Malalas clearly conceived of these raids<sup>77</sup> as part of the Persian war of Anastasius' reign, not merely as episodic independent wars against Byzantium. The Lakhmid ruler of that time, Nu'mān, died in 503 and was succeeded by his son Mundir, who celebrated his accession with an assault on Palestine. The role of Mundir in

<sup>75</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia*, 478.

<sup>76</sup> Although not legally, since the two powers were in a state of war, for the seven-year armistice of 505 had expired, without being renewed, in 513.

<sup>77</sup> Although he does not specify them, he must have been thinking of them when he talked about "the Arab raids."



the wars of Justin's reign was a repetition of his father's and his own role under Anastasius: the role of a vassal of the Persian king, not that of an independent sovereign conducting his own wars.

#### V. JABALA, THE GHASSĀNID FEDERATE KING

In the chapter on the reign of Anastasius, three Ghassānid figures, Tha'laba, Ḥārith, and Jid<sup>c</sup>, were recovered from the Arabic sources as historical and important for the Arab-Byzantine relationship. Data have emerged from these sources that have made these figures more than mere names.

Although Jabala was active in the reign of Anastasius, full treatment of him has been transferred to the reign of Justin I during which he was the pivotal Ghassānid figure in the course of their relations with Byzantium. When Nöldeke wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids, Jabala was a name associated with events around 500, thereafter disappearing from the sources then known.<sup>78</sup> Subsequently, further sources, especially the new letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām, have placed him around 520, leading to the identification of Aṭfar, who died in the battle of Thannūris in 528, with the Ghassānid federate king Jabala. He is thus seen to have lived through Justin's reign and into the first year of Justinian's, an eventful period in the history of Oriens and of Arab-Byzantine relations. This section will extract from the sources data for drawing a picture of this remarkable Ghassānid figure.<sup>79</sup>

Though the *explicit* of Simeon's letter is short, it contains much information.<sup>80</sup> First, Jabala is specifically referred to as king, as is confirmed both by the Arabic sources and by Zacharia in Syriac. He inherited the title from his father Ḥārith/Arethas, and Byzantium confirmed it. Second, he is referred to as "king of the Ghassānids," a welcome *basileus legomenon*. This phrase indicates clearly that Jabala was king only of the Ghassānids, not of the other *foederati* as well, as his son Arethas was to become in 530 when Justinian conferred the extraordinary *Basileia* on him. Third, the reference to Simeon's meeting Jabala in his camp at al-Jābiya establishes the Ghassānids in residence there, their future capital, as early as 520, in a place located within the *limes* on Roman territory, in the Gaulanitis. Since Jabala was a soldier, the place is termed his camp.<sup>81</sup>

The exhortation in Simeon's letter also provides valuable data on Jabala. First, one may infer from Simeon's impassioned language that, as Jabala was apparently reluctant to rush to the Najrānites' aid, he was getting old. This,

<sup>78</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 10.

<sup>79</sup> A preliminary attempt was made by the present writer in *El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. Djabala b. al-Ḥārith; see also the discussion of Jabala in *Martyrs*, 272-76.

<sup>80</sup> *Martyrs*, 63, and the commentary on the *explicit*, *ibid.*, 109-10.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63, 98-104.

however, may be an exaggeration on Simeon's part. Second, the reference to the "opulent residences" of the Ghassānids is an interesting parallel to the sources' testimony that Jabala built al-Qanāṭir, Aḍruḥ, and al-Qaṣṭal.<sup>82</sup> Third and most important is the reference to what must have been the *annona foederatica* the Ghassānids received.<sup>83</sup>

The Greek and Syriac sources are silent on Jabala after 519 when Simeon visited him at Jābiya. According to what was argued above, this would have been natural as the Ghassānids had withdrawn from Byzantium's service. If Jabala did not take part in the making of history in Oriens, he did in northern Ḥijāz, in Byzantium's Outer Shield, where he possibly possessed himself of some oases and helped his relatives, the Azd of Medina, in their wars with the Jewish population of that city.<sup>84</sup>

#### VI. PROCOPIUS ON THE REIGN OF JUSTIN I

Procopius treated the reign of Justin in much the way he had done that of Anastasius; his account involves a series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, pertaining to both Justin and the Arabs. As a result, many aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations were left out, and what is more, the importance of the reign was obscured; consequently the strands of continuity that ran from it to that of Justinian have been eliminated. To restore these strands and point out the omissions is the aim of this section.

#### Justin

Procopius' account of Justin's early life before he became emperor is recorded in the *Anecdota*, while that of his reign appears in the *Wars*. Between the two accounts the picture Procopius drew of Justin becomes amply clear.

1. The image he projected of Justin before he became emperor is most unflattering: Bederiana, the stragglng hamlet in the Illyrian countryside, which was his village; the journey on foot thence to Constantinople; his earthly possessions consisting of a cloak slung over his back with nothing but toasted bread in it; the time he spent behind bars in a Constantinopolitan prison; the un-Roman name of his nephew, Petrus Sabbatius; the indecorous name of his wife, Lupicina, a former barbarian slave and a concubine at that; and finally his illiteracy and his employment of a mechanical device for signing documents.<sup>85</sup> It was a man of this description and as Count of the Excubitors that, on the death of the good emperor Anastasius, became the emperor

<sup>82</sup> On Ghassānid structures in Oriens, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>83</sup> *Martyrs*, 63, 101-3.

<sup>84</sup> See the chapter on Byzantium and Medina in *BASIC* II.

<sup>85</sup> *Anecdota*, VI.1-17.



of the Romans, having forced aside "all the kinsmen of Anastasius, although they were numerous and also very distinguished."<sup>86</sup>

2. Procopius' account of his reign is also unflattering: the emperor was a nonentity and it was his nephew that ran the empire;<sup>87</sup> the thousands of *centenaria* hoarded and saved by Anastasius he allowed to be squandered also by the same nephew;<sup>88</sup> finally, he evinced his limitations and demonstrated a singular incompetence when he rushed to accede to the Persian king's request to adopt his son Chosroes; had it not been for Proclus, who counseled against this and explained the dangers attendant on such an accession, the disastrous adoption would have taken place.<sup>89</sup> In his account of the political and military history of Byzantium, he limits himself to a description of events in the Caucasus region, Iberia and Lazica, and thus gives the impression that hardly anything happened in the international relations of Byzantium other than these.<sup>90</sup> Thus the reign may be judged insignificant. Furthermore, as the founder of the house of Justin, the emperor made possible the accession of the disaster that was his nephew, the "prince of demons"<sup>91</sup> Justinian!

### The Arabs

The close examination of Arab-Byzantine relations undertaken in this chapter on the reign of Justin has gone a long way toward rehabilitating the reign as an important one during which much happened in Oriens and in international relations involving Byzantium. This will now be drawn upon, but only the most salient of these relations will now be presented or referred to.

1. The Ghassānids were the principal *foederati* of Byzantium during the reign of Justin, and they took the extraordinary step of withdrawing from the

<sup>86</sup> *History*, I.xi.1.

<sup>87</sup> *Anecdota*, VI.18-19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX.4-10.

<sup>89</sup> *History*, I.xi.1-30. All these charges can be rebutted, including the one concerning the *adoptio*. The failure of the negotiations on the *adoptio* left Kawad embittered and must have contributed to the deterioration of relations with Byzantium which finally broke out into open warfare. As to Chosroes, the intended beneficiary of the *adoptio*, he, too, was left bitter and his bitterness may explain his hostile attitude to Byzantium throughout his long reign; in the words of Procopius himself, he went back to his father Kawad "deeply injured at what had taken place and vowing vengeance on the Romans for their insult to him"; *ibid.*, I.xi.30. Thus it is possible to argue that Byzantium may have been spared the Persian wars of the reign of Chosroes had Justin been left to his devices and accepted the *adoptio*. On the controversy around the historicity of Procopius' account of the *adoptio* and indeed the entire episode, see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 265-68; Averil Cameron, "Agathias on the Sassanians," *DOP* 23-24 (1969-70), 149, and Procopius and the Sixth Century (Berkeley, 1985), 153-54.

<sup>90</sup> *History*, I.xii.1-19.

<sup>91</sup> On this phrase as a description of Justinian, see *Anecdota*, XII.32.

service because of his Chalcedonian ecclesiastical policy. This was an event of some importance in Oriens, and yet there is not a word on it in the *History*.

2. More important than the Ghassānids were the Lakhmids who through their aggressive king, Mundir, ravaged the limitrophe in Oriens at the beginning of the reign and toward the end, and possibly in the middle part as well. In one of his campaigns, Mundir succeeded in capturing two Roman dukes, Timostratus and John.<sup>92</sup> And yet there is not a word on these campaigns, nor on the important international conference at Ramla, in which Byzantine diplomacy was heavily involved.

3. More important than events associated with both the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids were events that took place in South Arabia, the persecutions and the martyrdoms, which involved the Arabs, the Ḥimyarites, and the Ethiopians. These events convulsed the Arabian Peninsula, and their repercussions encompassed the whole of the Near East, involving Persia, Ethiopia, and Byzantium, which contributed a fleet for the transportation of the Ethiopian expeditionary force across the Red Sea to South Arabia.<sup>93</sup> And yet there is hardly a word on these events.<sup>94</sup> Instead, Procopius limited himself to what took place on the northern front, in the Caucasus, thus drawing attention from more important events that took place in the south, in both Oriens and South Arabia.<sup>95</sup>

### Procopius

The questions inevitably arise: why did Procopius indulge in all these omissions, and was he expected to include all this in his account of the reign?

1. If he was not expected to include a comprehensive account of all these events or some of them, at least some meaningful reference to them was expected. After all, he was writing a specialized and detailed history of the reign of Justinian, and the latter, as is well known, ruled if not reigned during the nine years of his uncle's reign; so the reign of Justin is very much his concern, much more so than that of Anastasius to which he devoted more space than he did to that of Justin. Furthermore, Procopius came from Caesarea, in Palaestina Prima, and so belonged to that region and presumably should have

<sup>92</sup> On his knowledge of these campaigns, especially the capture of the two Roman commanders, see below, 53–54.

<sup>93</sup> For these events, see *Martyrs*, and also "Conference of Ramla," 129 note 53.

<sup>94</sup> With the exception of a passing and fruitless reference in his account of the reign of Justinian, for which see below, 145–46.

<sup>95</sup> This short list of omissions does not include Kinda, since little or nothing on it during this reign has survived in the sources, and yet suddenly much about it is disclosed around 530, some of which is owed to Procopius himself; see the present writer in "Procopius and Kinda," *BZ* 53 (1960), 78 note 15.

had some interest in it; finally, he was appointed *symbolos* to Belisarius in 527 when the latter was assigned to a command in Oriens, and so the Arabs, Oriens, and Arabia were very much his concern.

2. Did he know about these events? The presumption is that he did, especially since, as has just been noted, he came from that region and was appointed *symbolos* to Belisarius during his service in Oriens. That he knew about these events is clear from his reference to Mundir's capture of the two Roman dukes and his passing reference to events in South Arabia, elsewhere than in the chapter on the reign of Justin to which these events belonged. Furthermore, Procopius consulted documents and archives when he wrote his work, and so if he did not witness these events or was not close to them, he could have extracted his information on them from these documents and archives.<sup>96</sup>

3. Finally, the question of motives arises. Why did Procopius indulge in these omissions about the Arabs and in drawing such an uncomplimentary picture of Justin? As has been argued<sup>97</sup> and as will be argued again in this volume,<sup>98</sup> it was an expression of *Kaiserkritik*, principally directed against Justinian and only secondarily against Justin. Arab and Arabian affairs played an important role in the building of the case against Justinian, and although Procopius looked at the Arabs in much the same way as he did at all barbarians who were responsible for the process of decline, it was mainly Justinian that was his target.

The function of these omissions in his *Kaiserkritik* directed against Justinian may be explained as follows. Around 530 Justinian engaged in two important political and diplomatic activities: (a) he created Arethas supreme phylarch and king over all the Saracen *foederati* in Oriens, and this was the climax of his federate Arab policy; (b) and about the same time he sent Julian as his ambassador plenipotentiary to negotiate and organize a war effort against the Persians, involving the Arabs of the Peninsula, the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia, and the Ethiopians in Africa, and that was the climax of his Arabian and Red Sea diplomacy. Procopius presents these two achievements as outstanding examples of Justinian's folly: Arethas was incompetent and turned out to be a traitor to the Roman cause, while the Arabian and Red Sea policy proved to be a failure. The contrary was of course the truth,<sup>99</sup> but what is relevant in this context is to explain how the omissions in Procopius' narrative contributed to his *Kaiserkritik*.

<sup>96</sup> This is evident from his sketch of the career of Mundir, especially the statement on his reign of fifty years, which is accurate and must have been extracted from archives in Constantinople since this took place in 554, long after Procopius departed Oriens and when he was living in Constantinople. For his account of Mundir, see *History*, I.xvii.40–48.

<sup>97</sup> See the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ* 50 (1957), 366–80.

<sup>98</sup> In Chapter III on the reign of Justinian, below, 297–306.

<sup>99</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas."

A detailed recitation of the tale of woes that Mundir inflicted on Oriens would have raised in the mind of the reader the question of the whereabouts of the *foederati* of Byzantium, the Ghassānids, who were employed to deal precisely with this sort of threat. This would have led Procopius to say that they withdrew from the service on doctrinal grounds, and thus the image of the Ghassānids would have been that of a Christian group who cared for the Christian Roman Empire, were loyal to it, and consequently were not rude and unreliable barbarians whose chief, Arethas, was wrongly and quixotically chosen by Justinian to be king of all the federate Arabs in Oriens. Thus Justinian appears as a dangerous innovator, too, building on no tradition of federate service or loyalty to the empire that went back to the two preceding reigns.

His silence on the momentous events in South Arabia in which Byzantium was involved was similarly motivated. A detailed account would have had to include the fact that Justin contributed a fleet that transported the Ethiopian expedition from Africa to South Arabia and thus made possible the Ethiopian conquest of South Arabia and its consequent amenability to Byzantine political and religious influence. Thus his evaluation of the efficiency of the embassy of Julian would not have fared well and would have carried no great conviction, since the reader would have rightly concluded that Justinian was reaping the harvest of what his uncle had sown and was counting on a substantial degree of friendliness and pro-Byzantine sympathies among the rulers of the southern Semites to whom Julian was sent, as a result of the Byzantine contribution of a fleet. Furthermore, the picture of Justinian as a foolish innovator who was charting perilous courses for Byzantium would not have been borne out since the events of the reign of Justin would have suggested to the reader that Byzantine-Ḥimyarite-Ethiopian relations had already been firmly established in the previous reign.

Finally, a word may be said on the two vague references involving the Lakhmids and the Ḥimyarites during the reign of Justin.

1. That Procopius certainly knew of the devastating campaign of Mundir which resulted in the capture of the two Roman commanders, Timostratus and John, is amply clear from his reference to them in the *History*.<sup>100</sup> They appear not where they should have appeared, namely, in his account of the reign of Justin, but later in his narrative, in his account of the first years of Justinian's reign. In addition to this deliberate transfer of data from the right to the wrong reign, the reference is very brief and is couched in general noninformative terms, thus concealing the magnitude of the Lakhmid-Byzantine encounter which brought about an important international conference at

<sup>100</sup> *History*, I.xvii.43-44.

Ramla in which Byzantium was heavily involved. An account of this conference was left by the Byzantine diplomat involved, which was later incorporated into the book that his son, Nonnosus, wrote on the services of his family to Byzantium.<sup>101</sup> Procopius certainly had access to this diplomatic document in Constantinople. In addition to transferring the episode to the reign of Justinian, he presented it in the context of his *Kaiserkritik* of Justinian, in the long passage that described the prowess, efficiency, and loyalty of the Persian Arab federate, the Lakhmid Mundir, in order to belittle by contrast his Byzantine, Ghassānid counterpart, Arethas, whom Justinian created supreme phylarch and king as a counterpoise to Mundir.

2. The same may be said of his handling of the events in South Arabia—the persecutions and the martyrdom and the conquest of South Arabia by Ethiopia.<sup>102</sup> All this he dispatched in a few sentences, leaving the reader in doubt as to the date of these events and probably inclining him to think that they happened in the early years of Justinian's reign which Procopius was then discussing. On the negotiations that involved the Byzantine king and the fleet which Byzantium put at the disposal of the Ethiopians as her contribution to the war, Procopius is not only silent but downright misleading when he says of the Negus of Ethiopia that "he collected a fleet of ships and an army and came against them" (the Ḥimyarites), thus suggesting that the fleet was Ethiopian while in fact it was sent by none other than "the Illyrian peasant" from Bederiana, Justin himself. All this together with the account of the events that followed in South Arabia serve as an appropriate background for his unceremonious account of Justinian's dispatch of Julian, whose mission he clearly wanted the reader to consider a failure, a fatuous diplomatic effort, and an encounter with futility.<sup>103</sup>

Perhaps the foregoing discussion has helped explain the motive behind Procopius' omissions and silence on some important aspects of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin—*Kaiserkritik* directed against Justinian. This was the conclusion when his account of the reign of Justinian was examined in 1957, with special regard to his account of the Ghassānid Arethas.<sup>104</sup> But when Procopius' handling of the career of Arethas was then examined, only the *immediate* antecedents of Arethas and the Ghassānids were laid under contribution for buttressing the argument against Procopius and his prejudice. The examination of the reign of Justin undertaken here provides more evidence against Procopius by uncovering the remoter antecedents of

<sup>101</sup> See "Conference of Ramla."

<sup>102</sup> *History*, I.xx.1.

<sup>103</sup> For the embassy of Julian, see *ibid.*, I.xx.9–13.

<sup>104</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 39–67, 362–82.

Ghassānid- and Arab-Byzantine relations which Procopius succeeded in obscuring or even entirely suppressing in his work.

## APPENDIX I

Latin *Limes*, Syriac *Līmiṭōn*

The Latin term *limes* in its Syriac form<sup>1</sup> appears often in Syriac chronicles treating the Byzantine-Persian wars that involved the Arabs. Its occurrence in these sources presents some problems of interpretation. Both its connotation and denotation in certain passages pertaining to the sixth century need to be clarified. A closer examination of the contexts within which the term occurs reveals that in these passages it is not a common noun meaning *limes* in general, but a proper noun denoting only that segment of the *limes* in Mesopotamia and Osrhoene.

In Syriac the term for *limes* in the general sense of "frontier" is *tkhūmā*. The use of the word *līmiṭōn* by Syriac writers implies a special sense or use of this term. There is explicit testimony for this special use in the Greek author Evagrius, who clearly uses the term as a proper noun when speaking of the desert tracts traversed by Gregory, the Orthodox patriarch of Antioch, toward the end of the sixth century. Although Evagrius gives no precise indication of their geographical location,<sup>2</sup> it can be supplied from the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, who defines the area of *līmiṭōn* as that of the rivers Khābūr and Balīḥ, tributaries of the Euphrates.<sup>3</sup>

The denominative use of the term *limes* in Syriac authors is supported by the military reorganization of the provinces of Mesopotamia and Osrhoene as described by Procopius.<sup>4</sup> In the Persian wars during the reigns of Justin and Justinian this area became the most important theater of war in the East, and its *limes* gave its name to the area in much the same way as the *Strata Diocletiana* gave its name in Procopius to only a section of the original *Strata*, southeast of Palmyra.<sup>5</sup>

The term in Syriac authors is thus a denominative and should be translated as

<sup>1</sup> *Līmiṭōn*, *līmīṭōn*: for lemmata in Syriac authors see R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus* (Oxford, 1879–1901), II, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> τὰς πανεθῆμους τῶν λεγομένων Λιμητῶν περιουστῶν: *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898), 238. Zacharia (*HE*, 175) also uses *līmiṭōn* in recounting Gregory's attempts to recover the region for orthodoxy.

<sup>3</sup> *Chronique*, 178. Michael's definition of the area of *līmiṭōn* is supported by Zacharia, who twice uses *līmiṭōn* (not *tkhūmā*) and indicates its location. In the first case he refers to Chosroes' campaign in the second Persian war under Justinian: "de Kāsrūn qui ascendit et Callinicum et cetera castra limitis Euphratis et Ḥābhurā expugnavit" (*HE*, 117); Chosroes attacks the "*Limes* of the Euphrates and the Khābūr." Callinicum is near the confluence of the Euphrates and the Balīḥ, as Circesium was at the confluence of the Euphrates and the Khābūr. In the second case he refers to the activities of Gregory: "et Surā et Callinicum et reliquum litem" (*HE*, 118). The *limes* is associated with the fortresses of Sura and Callinicum on the Euphrates line, and separated from the other places mentioned in the passage.

<sup>4</sup> *Buildings*, index, s.vv. Mesopotamia and Osrhoene.

<sup>5</sup> *History*, II.i.6.



such, not by the general and misleading "frontier," which is too vague.<sup>6</sup> Thus when Mundir mounted his offensive of 520 against the *līmīṭōn*, as recorded in the *Chronicle* of Elias, metropolitan of Nisibis,<sup>7</sup> the term refers to a specific sector of the Roman frontier, namely, Mesopotamia between the Balīḥ and Khābūr rivers. The term is singular, not plural, since it is simply a transliteration of the Greek form of the Latin *limes*, τὸ λίμιτον.<sup>8</sup>

A measure of what can happen to this term when its significance is not grasped is reflected in the following comedy of errors. It was started by the Latin translator of Bar-Hebraeus who wrote "Mondarus, rex Arabum, depopulatus est omnem Dalmatiam," i.e., Beliham et Haburam. On the basis of this translation Vasiliev saw in Dalmatia the Dabanas of the *Notitia Dignitatum*, xxxv.6.18, which E. Honigmann had conjectured was situated in Osrhoene.<sup>9</sup> The "Dalmatia" of the Latin translator is, of course, none other than the Syriac phrase *d' līmīṭōn*, lit. "of *līmīṭōn*." The translator thought the preposition "d" preceding *līmīṭōn* was part of the word which followed it, and he read the two words as one lexical unit, Dalmatia!

## APPENDIX II

### The Pella Inscription

On the lintel of a tomb in Pella of the Decapolis was engraved a funerary inscription in 521/22, commemorating two soldiers each called John.

† Μνημ(εῖ)<η>ον διαφέρον Ἰωάννη  
 [Θεοδ]ώρ(ιχ)<κκ>ου (?) καὶ ἐτέρῳ Ἰωάννη  
 καθ(ω)<ο>σιωμ(έ)<ι>νοῖς στρατιώταις ὀρμωμένοις ἀπ(ὸ)  
 χ(ωρ)ῶν (?) τοῦ ἀράβων ἔθνους. Γενόμενον ἐν χρόνο-  
 ις ἰνδικτ(ιώνος) ι[ε] τοῦ δπφ ἔτους.

The author of *Pella of the Decapolis*, in which this inscription was published, rendered it into English as follows: "† Tomb belonging to Iohannes, son of The-

<sup>6</sup> Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 1941; C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum* (Göttingen, 1928), 367. Budge also translates it as "frontier": see Budge, trans., *The Chronography of Bar-Hebraeus*, 73–74. It should, however, be recognized as a technical military term, as explained here.

<sup>7</sup> See above, 43.

<sup>8</sup> Payne Smith evidently conceived of it as a plural in the phrase *athrā d' līmīṭōn*; witness the translation ἡ χώρα τῶν λιμητῶν: *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 1941. This is impossible to accept. Syriac took over the word from Greek in its nominative singular form λίμιτον and not as a genitive plural λιμητῶν. The word is almost always used in the singular in Greek authors, and the exceptions to this are explicable. Evagrius' text (above, note 2) has a plural, possibly from attraction to the number of the preceding plural form πανερήμιους. It is also possible that the scribe wrote λιμητῶν for λίμιτον, substituting an omega for the omicron. In the late glosses to the *Basilika* (DuCange, *Glossarium*, 814), λιμητά has by that time come to mean "fortresses," not relevant here.

<sup>9</sup> See Vasiliev, *Justin*, 277 note 33. On the term *limes*, see B. Isaac, "The Meaning of 'Limes' and 'Limitanei' in Ancient Sources," *JRS* 78 (1988), 125–47; idem, *The Limits of Empire* (Oxford, 1990). The problem of the oriental *limes* and the relation of the Ghassānids to it will be fully treated in *BASIC* II.

odorichos[?], and to another Iohannes, dedicated soldiers, by origin coming from regions[?] of the Arab nation. Made in the time of the 15th indiction, year 584.”<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to refine on the palaeographical, philological, and historical observations of Robert H. Smith on this inscription, and the following conclusions may be presented on the two soldiers, based on his commentary. (1) The two soldiers (*stratiōtai*) were apparently comrades in arms. They must have served as such in the army of Oriens during the reigns of Anastasius and Justin, dying in that of the latter. (2) They are described in the inscription as καθωσωμένοι στρατιῶται, which translates *milites devoti*, “dedicated soldiers,” and “bore a dignified title which gave them standing in the community.” (3) Their exact military function is not entirely clear, and the author is inclined to think that they acted as “wardens of the frontier.”<sup>2</sup>

### A

The most relevant part of the inscription for Arab-Byzantine relations is naturally the one that refers to “regions of the Arab nation.” Smith writes: “Even though the men were probably not Arabs themselves, they considered Arab territory their homeland.”<sup>3</sup> This is the only part in the commentary that is impossible to agree with. The clear reference to the Arab nation (better, “people”) in the inscription can lead only to the conclusion that the two soldiers were Arabs. In support of this the following observations and arguments may be adduced.

1. Smith is possibly inclined to think of them as non-Arabs partly because of the onomasticon in the inscription. But the Arabs upon conversion to Christianity assumed biblical and Christian names, such as John, and those who came from families that were already Christian were given such names after their birth. Christian Arabs assumed the names John and Theodore, and often a Christian Arab used his Christian name and his Christian patronymic, as in this case.

2. The patronymic of one of them seems to have inclined the editor to think of them as possibly Germans. He bases this on the assumption that the name of the father was the German/Gothic-looking or sounding Theodoric. But this form of “Theodore” is clearly a conjectural restoration, and the name of the father could very well have been different and Arab, as the editor is aware.<sup>4</sup> A Christian Arab could very well have been called John, son of Theodore.

3. The editor restored the word that comes before the phrase “the Arab nation or people” as χωρῶν and translates the entire phrase “by origin coming from regions of the Arab nation.” Assuming that the restoration is correct, it does not follow that the two soldiers were not Arab.

a. The regions in this context cannot have been the Peninsula of the Arabs but the Provincia Arabia.

b. Ethnically the Provincia was the former Nabataea, before its annexation by

<sup>1</sup> See R. Houston Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis* (Wooster, Ohio, 1973), I, 188. Pella dated according to the Era of Pompey, 63 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> For his commentary on which these conclusions are based, see *ibid.*, 188–91.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 190–91.



Trajan in A.D. 106. When someone is referred to in the Byzantine sources as coming from the Provincia Arabia, the natural presumption is that he was an Arab, a Rhomaic Arab.<sup>5</sup> That particular province in Oriens was so much conceived as an Arab province that a few years later when Justinian referred to it in one of his novels, he referred to it as "the country of the Arabs, ἡ τῶν Ἀράβων χώρα."<sup>6</sup> The phrase in Justinian's novel is almost identical with the phrase in this inscription.

c. Although reference to Arabia was usually enough to indicate the Arab origin of a person so referred to in the Byzantine sources, in this case the conclusion is clinched by ethnic reference to the Arab people, τοῦ Ἀράβων ἔθνους. This leaves no doubt whatsoever that what is involved here is Arab descent and not only provenance from Arabia as a geographical area.

d. This can be further confirmed by remembering that those who had the inscription engraved were not Arabs but inhabitants of Pella, which was not in the Provincia Arabia but was a Hellenistic foundation, a city of the Decapolis in Palaestina Secunda. Its inhabitants were aware that they were Greeks or Graeco-Romans, hence the point of indicating that the deceased were not of them but belonged to the people who inhabited the Provincia that surrounded them, peopled by another race—the Arabs.

e. The editor was careful in making his palaeographical observations on the text he restored and was aware that his restorations were conjectural. He may be right in all his conjectures, but since they are such it is worth commenting on them and exploring other possibilities that are still open.

i. The controversial word is what was restored as χωρῶν, to which the editor added that "the possibility of a different reading must be held open."<sup>7</sup> It is possible that the *chi* is nothing but a cross,<sup>8</sup> and this leaves ων, open to two different interpretations: (a) The *omega* may go with ἀπ' in the preceding line, yielding ἀπό with an *omega* instead of the *omicron*, and the *nu* would be expletive, a mistake on the part of the engraver. (b) Alternatively, one could read a *tau* before ων, making it τῶν, and going with Ἀράβων, the phrase would read τοῦ τῶν Ἀράβων ἔθνους, assuming that the engraver erroneously placed the τῶν before τοῦ instead of after it. What commends this restoration is the space before ων, a narrow one, that can accommodate only one letter rather than two, or three, as the editor suggested.

ii. Ὀρμωμένοις could present some difficulty since it normally means in such contexts hailing from a place. But it can be used in other senses, as in the phrase ἀπ' ἐλασσόνων ὀρμώμενος.<sup>9</sup> So conceivably the word in this context with τοῦ Ἀράβων ἔθνους after it may be translated as "descending from."

<sup>5</sup> On the Arab identity of Elias, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who hailed from Arabia, see *BAFIC*, 192 note 50.

<sup>6</sup> On this see *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, III, *Novellae*, p. 493, line 13, where χώρα appears in the accusative.

<sup>7</sup> *Pella of the Decapolis*, I, 189.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps balancing what looks like a cross before the first word in the inscription.

<sup>9</sup> "Beginning with smaller means" where "beginning" (ὀρμώμενος) does not imply coming or starting from a place. For the phrase, see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford, 1968), p. 1253.

These palaeographical observations have been made only because the editor himself suggested alternative attempts. His restoration is probably the best that can be done to produce an intelligible text, in spite of the curiosity presented by the use of the plural  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\omicron}\nu$ , in referring to the Provincia Arabia.<sup>10</sup> But if his restoration is accepted, his doubt on the ethnic origin of the two soldiers must be rejected, since from his own restored text it can be safely concluded that the two soldiers were not only natives of the Provincia Arabia as a geographical area but also were descended from its Arabs.

## B

The Arab identity of these two *stratiōtai* who came from the Provincia Arabia and died in Pella, a Hellenistic city of the Decapolis, in Palaestina Secunda, where they enjoyed some standing in the non-Arab community, calls for the following observations.

1. Assimilation. The two Arabs from the Provincia, presumably of "Nabataean" ancestry, are fully assimilated and integrated within the Byzantine system. They are Rhomaic Arabs, *cives*, to whose ancestors *civitas* was extended in A.D. 212 by Caracalla. Furthermore, they or their ancestors were Christianized; they joined the Roman army, defending the oriental *limes*, and in so doing they distinguished themselves.

2. The Arab image. The inscription was engraved not by relatives or heirs of the deceased soldiers, as is sometimes the case,<sup>11</sup> but by the community of Pella which belonged to the Graeco-Roman establishment in the empire. Yet the Pellan reference to the two *stratiōtai* is not the usual pejorative reference to the Arabs in the sources. These are *cives* of the Provincia and not Saracens of the Peninsula, raiders of the Byzantine *limes*; hence they are referred to in complimentary terms. The Arabs of the Provincia are considered Roman citizens like those of the Greeks of the Decapolis and are viewed as such by these, belonging to the same ethnic stock as Cosmas and Damian, the two saints who became especially popular in this period and were often referred to as Arabs.

Noteworthy is the fact that even after three centuries of *civitas* since the edict of Caracalla, the inhabitants of the Provincia Arabia are referred to with reference to their ethnic origin, as in the novel of Justinian. The Arab identity of the Provincia was still alive in the sixth century in the perception of the Graeco-Roman establishment in the Decapolis and no doubt in the self-image of its inhabitants. The fully assimilated and integrated Ammianus Marcellinus in the fourth century, after a lifetime of devotion to the Roman ideal and loyalty to Rome, reminds the reader of his *Res Gestae* in a short but crisp autobiographical note that he was Greek, not Roman.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the singular used by Justinian in referring to the Provincia, above, note 6. The use of the plural by the Pellans may possibly derive from the fact that Arabia consisted of some clearly defined areas, such as Auranitis, Trachonitis, Batanaea. So these might be the "regions" in the plural that constituted or partly constituted Arabia.

<sup>11</sup> See the inscriptions discussed in M. Speidel, *Roman Army Studies*, I (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 203 and 206.

His self-image as a *miles quondam et Graecus*<sup>12</sup> could easily have been the epitaph of the two Arab *stratiōtai* commemorated in the Pella inscription: *milites quondam et Arabes*. If the Pellans conceived of these Rhomaic Arabs of the Provincia, who had been Roman citizens for some three centuries, as Arabs, how much stronger must have been the feeling of Arabness among the *foederati*, such as the Ghassānids, who had hailed from that ethnic and linguistic reservoir of Arabness, namely, the Arabian Peninsula, in relatively recent times?

3. Federate-Rhomaic symbiosis. Unlike the Germans of the Roman Occident, the Arab *foederati* in the Orient were settled among a population that was ethnically related to them, the Arabs who had lived for centuries in the region, such as the Nabataeans and the Palmyrenes, long before Rome appeared on the stage of Near Eastern history.<sup>13</sup> Hence there was not that tension that obtained between the Germans and the indigenous populations of the Roman Occident. In the Roman/Byzantine army of Oriens, many of its units were locally recruited and many of its units were ethnically Arabs, as a close analysis of the *Notitia Dignitatum* has shown.<sup>14</sup> And when the Arab *foederati*, the Ghassānids, became *foederati* and formed units in the army of Oriens, they were fighting for the same empire with some fellow Arabs who were soldiers in the regular Byzantine army such as the *stratiōtai* commemorated in this Pellan inscription.

The function of these two *stratiōtai* was discussed by the editor, Robert Smith, and he suggested that it might have been that of "the warden of the frontier," καθ-ωσωμένως τοποτηρητής τοῦ λυμίτου.<sup>15</sup> This is possible, and if so, it will parallel what the *foederati* were also doing along the oriental *limes*. In an inscription engraved by one of them, the Arab federate soldier refers to himself as ὄρικος,<sup>16</sup> that is, a *limitaneus*, watching over the *limes*. Whether the two *stratiōtai* were technically "wardens of the frontier" is not clear, but this was what they were doing. They died in 521/22, four years after Justin I began his reign. But the front with Persia was quiet in that period and during the previous reign since the conclusion of the peace with Persia in 506. It follows from this that the duties of the army of Oriens in these limitrophe provinces such as Palestine and Arabia were those of warding off the raids of the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula on the *limes*, in which Rhomaic Arabs, enrolled in the regular Byzantine units, and federate Arabs, employed as *symmachoi*, fought side by side.

<sup>12</sup> *Res Gestae*, xxxi. 16.9.

<sup>13</sup> See the present writer in *RA*.

<sup>14</sup> See *BAFIC*, 459–71.

<sup>15</sup> See *Pella of the Decapolis*, I, 190.

<sup>16</sup> See below, 509–11.

### III

## The Reign of Justinian (527–565)

#### INTRODUCTION

As far as Arab-Byzantine relations are concerned, this longest and most significant reign of the century is divisible into five distinct phases.

1. The first phase is coterminous with the first Persian war, which raged from 527 until the conclusion of the Endless Peace in 532. In addition to active Ghassānid participation in the campaigns of the war, this phase witnessed the creation of the Ghassānid supreme phylarchate/*Basileia* in Oriens in 529 and Justinian's vigorous diplomatic offensive in the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea area. This phase also witnessed the waning of the power of Kinda, the other important federate group in the service of Byzantium.

2. The Inter-War period of seven years, 532–539, was a period of peace between the two Persian wars of Justinian's reign. Its interest derives mainly from the administrative reforms initiated by Justinian in Oriens and how these affected the fortunes of the Ghassānids and the working of the phylarchal/federate system after the creation of the supreme phylarchate/*Basileia* in 529. Two novels and one edict will be analyzed, as well as the *encomia* of Choricus of Gaza. But if peace reigned in the Orient, it did not in the Occident, and the treatment of this second phase opens with an examination of the possibility of Ghassānid participation in the Vandal war.

3. The third phase, that of the second Persian war, opened with a border dispute—the *Strata*—in which the Ghassānids played a prominent role. They participated in the campaigns of the war such as the Assyrian campaign of 541, and that of 542, but the chief historian of this war, Procopius, has obscured their role by suppressing accounts of their participation in other campaigns. Hence some attention is paid to the examination of his historiography.

4. The fourth phase is represented by the Ghassānid-Lakhmid conflict which persisted, however intermittently, for some fifteen years between the conclusion of the "Peace" of 545 and that of 561. It has been neglected by historians of this period but, as will later be shown, it cannot be isolated from the larger Persian-Byzantine conflict in Lazica, which continued to be fought even after the conclusion of the "Peace" of 545. The highlight of this federate



war was the smashing Ghassānid victory of 554, when at the battle of Chalcis their adversaries, the Lakhmids, were defeated and their king, Muṅḍir, was killed.

5. The fifth phase opens with the conclusion of the Peace of 561 and ends with the death of Justinian in 565. These four years were a period of peaceful relations between the two world powers, and so it was between the two Arab federates, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, with the exception of insignificant provocations on the part of the Lakhmids. It was in this period, in 563, that Arethas paid his last visit to Justinian in Constantinople during which he arranged for the succession of his son Muṅḍir to the supreme phylarchate/*Basileia*.

## A

### The First Persian War (527–532)

As noted earlier, the first Persian war broke out openly in 527, the last year of the reign of Justin I, and the Lakhmid Arabs were heavily involved in its outbreak. With the return of the Ghassānids to the service shortly after Justinian became sole emperor in August 527, Arab participation in the operations of the Persian war was no longer one-sided, limited to that of the Lakhmid Arabs, the vassals of Sasanid Persia, but now included the *foederati* of Byzantium, the Ghassānids. The participation of the Ghassānids is attested in the operations of the four remaining years of the war from 528 to 531 with the exception of the year 530. This participation involved the following engagements and operations: the punitive expedition against the Lakhmid Muṅḍir and the battle of Thannūris, both in 528; the quelling of the Samaritan revolt in 529; the battle of Callinicum and the campaign that culminated in the operations around Martyropolis in 531. These operations have not been as intensively analyzed as other operations of the Persian wars, but they deserve to be. They are full of significant details that illuminate the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the crucial reign of Justinian and throw light on strictly Byzantine as well as general Near Eastern problems.

As *foederati*, the Ghassānids were expected to participate in *all* the campaigns of the first Persian war. Documentation of this participation is expected of Procopius since he was the principal historian of this war, but he does not provide it. Hence this detailed discussion of the Persian war sheds light on Byzantine historiography as well as Byzantine history.

#### I. THE RETURN OF THE GHASSĀNIDS

After having withdrawn from the service of Byzantium during the better part of the reign of Justin, the Ghassānids returned to it in the first year of the new reign. They participated in two important operations in 528: the punitive expedition against the Lakhmid Muṅḍir in the first part of the year and

the battle of Thanūris in the second. As the Greek sources do not refer to them as Ghassānids, their participation has to be argued for by a process of identification involving Arethas, who appears as the chief phylarch in the first operation, and Aṭfar/Jabala, who appears as phylarch in the second.

### Identifications

#### *Arethas*

The identification of the phylarch who participated in the expedition against Muṇḍir with the future Ghassānid king Arethas can be made without much difficulty.<sup>1</sup> Procopius states that an Arab chief/phylarch named Arethas was appointed king by Justinian around 530, expressly saying that he was appointed as a counterpoise to Muṇḍir.<sup>2</sup> It makes sense, therefore, to conclude that the phylarch with the same name who had distinguished himself in the Byzantine military operation against Muṇḍir was the same person as the Ghassānid king. The almost *immediate* appointment as king of a phylarch named Arethas also argues for this identification. Had a long time elapsed between the two events, it could be argued that some other phylarch named Arethas might have achieved sufficient military distinction to be appointed king. The appointment was almost immediate, however, and the sources mention no Arethas around 530 who could have been an alternative possibility.<sup>3</sup> This looks like a causal sequence, seeing also that Arethas' military record in the expedition could be viewed as grounds for the appointment. References to the provinces, especially Arabia, in the Malalas passage also support this identification. Although the chronographer does not specify of which province Arethas was phylarch, the chances are that it was Arabia, this being the province of the phylarch who, according to Procopius, was made the Ghassānid king around 530. The names of the other phylarchs who took part in the expedition, Naaman and Jafna, point to the same conclusion, since they were names assumed by Ghassānids. Though Nu'mān (Naaman) is not exclusively so, being also assumed by Lakhmids, Jafna is a resoundingly Ghassānid name, the Ghassānids being often referred to eponymously as "the sons of Jafna."<sup>4</sup>

#### *Aṭfar/Jabala*

Jabala, the father of Arethas, appears under the name or title of Aṭfar, the Arabic form or Semitic equivalent of Flavius, leading the Ghassānid *foederati* at the battle of Thanūris, during which he died from an accident

<sup>1</sup> See Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 434–35.

<sup>2</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

<sup>3</sup> His namesake, Arethas, was the Kindite chief and king whose death at the hands of the Lakhmid Muṇḍir called for the punitive expedition in which the Ghassānid Arethas participated.

<sup>4</sup> See *BASIC II*.

with his horse.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that Aṭfar, the Tapharas of the sources, is the Ghassānid king Jabala who had written an important chapter in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations in the reigns of Anastasius and Justin. Though this identification was made nearly twenty years ago, it will be restated here, fortified with further subsequent evidence on the Ghassānid dynasty.<sup>6</sup>

The identification may first be supported by the picture of Aṭfar drawn by the two main sources, Zacharia and Malalas. Despite the number of commanders mentioned as having taken part in the battle of Thannūris, prominence is given to Aṭfar, especially by Zacharia. Since the two main Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in this period were Kinda and Ghassān, an Arab federate chief described in such detail and with such warmth by a Byzantine source would have been either a Kindite or a Ghassānid phylarch. The chief of Kinda, Arethas son of ʿAmr, had died earlier in the year after having quit the service of Byzantium.<sup>7</sup> This leaves the chief of Ghassān in this period, Jabala,<sup>8</sup> there being no room for another. Furthermore, Zacharia is unusually warm about Aṭfar. While he lists some of the commanders who fell at the battle of Thannūris, he singles out Aṭfar for an obituary notice.<sup>9</sup> Since Zacharia was a Monophysite, his doctrinal persuasion probably influenced his interest in Aṭfar, who shared this confession with him:<sup>10</sup> the Ghassānids were known to be staunch Monophysites, with Jabala having received Simeon of Bēth-Arshām in his camp at Jābiya early in the reign of Justin.<sup>11</sup> Thus no federate chief in this period was as militarily outstanding and doctrinally Monophysite as was Jabala, who must be the Aṭfar of the sources, and whose death at Thannūris in 528<sup>12</sup> was followed by the elevation of his son Arethas to the extraordinary *Basileia*.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Malalas, *Chronographia*, 441–42, and Zacharia Scholasticus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, CSCO 88, versio, 64; CSCO 84, textus, 93, for the Syriac.

<sup>6</sup> See the present writer in *Martyrs*, 273–75.

<sup>7</sup> See below, 70–71.

<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy in this connection that Zacharia does not refer to him simply as a phylarch or a commander but as king. This points to federates who were a royal dynasty, which the Ghassānids were.

<sup>9</sup> See below, 65–66.

<sup>10</sup> The part of "Zacharia's" *HE* dealing with Justin and Justinian is actually Pseudo-Zacharia: see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 183–84.

<sup>11</sup> See *Martyrs*, 63.

<sup>12</sup> An Arabic verse indicates that Jabala did not die in his bed, but met a violent death. Although it was a lampoon intended to belittle and spread lies about his son Arethas, it does confirm Malalas and Zacharia to the effect that Jabala was killed. See *BASIC II*.

<sup>13</sup> Jabala's fame as a warrior is reflected in the obituary notice (below), and may also be reflected in the reference to his son during the campaign of 531 not by his given name of Arethas but by his patronymic, Bar-Jabala; Zacharia, *HE*, 67. Arethas is referred to here as "king of the Arabs," as his father had been in Zacharia's account of the battle of Thannūris.

Finally, the chronology of the expedition and the battle of Thannūris argues for the identification of Aṭfar with Jabala. The expedition antedates the battle by some months in 528, but the two operations are crucial for the identification. The expedition leaves no doubt that by April 528 the Ghassānids had returned to the service of Byzantium. A reference to an Arab king with that description who marches with Belisarius a few months later against the Persians can only be to a Ghassānid, while the account of Thannūris makes it certain that the Ghassānid in question can only have been Jabala.

A detailed examination of Zacharia's notice of Jabala will clinch this identification. It will turn on both the name "Aṭfar" and the data conveyed in the obituary notice. In the Latin version of Zacharia, the obituary notice reads: "et vir fuit bellicosus ac sapiens, et armis Romanorum multum exercitatus erat, et in locis diversis pugnis illustris factus erat et celebrer erat."<sup>14</sup> This laconic but precise and diversified account of the competence of the federate chief can point to no commander of this period in the service of Byzantium other than Jabala.

1. *Bellicosus* suggests the valiant warrior who had attacked the Roman *limes* ca. 500, and according to Theophanes it was only after hard-contested battles that Romanus, *dux* of Palestine, was able to wear him down. His military prowess must have been displayed in the course of the next thirty years against the Lakhmids, the Persians, and the Jews of Medina.<sup>15</sup>

2. *Sapiens* describes the intellectual quality of his leadership, as *bellicosus* does the moral. He displayed his wisdom in refusing to come to the aid of the Najrānites in South Arabia as advocated by Simeon.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the Syriac that is rendered *sapiens* admits of being translated "crafty, wily, cunning," a prized quality in a warrior: perhaps this is what Zacharia intended, as witnessed by the ruse that trapped the Jewish tribes of Medina.<sup>17</sup>

3. *Armīs Romanorū multum exercitatus erat*: this valuable datum explicitly states that Byzantium's Arab *foederati* learned Roman methods of warfare and used Roman weapons. What these arms that Jabala used in his battles were is not stated, but references to them in contemporary Arabic poetry could throw light on them.<sup>18</sup>

4. *Et in locis diversis pugnis illustris factus erat*: again this points to the ubiquitous Jabala, who fought in the south of Oriens, in Palestine, around

<sup>14</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, p. 64, lines 18–20. It is reminiscent of the epitaph of Imru' al-Qays, the 4th-century Arab federate king; cf. *BAFIC*, 31–51.

<sup>15</sup> See *BAFIC*, 120–31.

<sup>16</sup> *Martyrs*, 276.

<sup>17</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>18</sup> See *ibid.*



500; in Ḥīra, at the other end of the Fertile Crescent, the following year; against the Persians under Anastasius; against the Arabs of Ḥijāz and its Jewish tribes in the reign of Justin; and in the north of Oriens, at the battle of Thannūris in 528, the first year of Justinian's reign, when he died.<sup>19</sup>

*Aṣfar/Atfar/Flavius.* It will be argued that the name "Aṣfar" that appears in the Syriac work of Zacharia is a translation of the Latin title Flavius, which thus became one of the designations by which Jabala was known, the Arabic Aṣfar.<sup>20</sup> This name throws much light on the career of Jabala and on Byzantine-Ghassānid relations in the first year of Justinian's reign, and will further support the identification of Aṣfar with Jabala. In support of this interpretation one may observe the following.

1. The term was already known in pre-Islamic Arabic, in the phrase "the Sons of the Yellow," "Banū al-Aṣfar," a designation of the *Rhomaioi*, the Byzantines. It is also noteworthy that the phrase is not pejorative, as it came to be in later Islamic times.<sup>21</sup>

2. The course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin I could make it intelligible how Jabala acquired this title. After having withdrawn from the service of Byzantium, the Ghassānids returned in the first year of Justinian's reign and were restored to imperial favor.<sup>22</sup> To cement the bonds of the new alliance, especially after a period of alienation and insubordination, the emperor conferred on the recently reconciled *foederatus* the title of Flavius, which allied him to the emperor and the family of the second Flavians. So to his titles of phylarch and king, Jabala the Ghassānid added the honorific title Flavius, which induced in him a sense of loyalty to the emperor who restored him to imperial favor.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> It is noteworthy how far from their base in the Provincia Arabia the Ghassānids fought for Byzantium, a sure sign that they virtually formed part of the *exercitus comitatensis* of the empire in the 6th century. Jabala fights in Mesopotamia, while his son Arethas goes beyond Thannūris in Mesopotamia into Armenia and Assyria.

<sup>20</sup> The Syriac author is a more useful guide than Malalas to the name by which Jabala appears in the account of the battle of Thannūris. Syriac, a Semitic language, more faithfully preserves the Arabic Aṣfar, "yellow," a translation of the Latin Flavius, than does Malalas' Greek rendering Τὰφάρδος. On Aṣfar/Aṣfar as a translation of Flavius see *Martyrs*, 273-75. Since that study was published, Jabala has emerged more clearly as a historical personality, reinforcing the concept of the name translation.

<sup>21</sup> See M. al-Mu'aybid, ed., *Dīwān of 'Adī ibn-Zayd* (Baghdad, 1965), 87, verse 23. As 'Adī ibn-Zayd was a Christian poet, he was sympathetic to the *Rhomaioi* of the Christian Roman Empire, although he lived in Lakhmid and Persian territory. For the 9th-century Islamic poet Abū Tammām, the panegyrist of al-Mu'taṣim, the conqueror of Amorium, "yellow" in the phrase "the Sons of the Yellow" signified one who is frequently diseased or ill, Arabic *mimrād*, an epithet also applied to his descendants the *Rhomaioi* whom the caliph defeated.

<sup>22</sup> Perhaps a new *foedus* was struck between the Ghassānids and Byzantium on their return.

<sup>23</sup> A distinction should be made between the title Flavius when bestowed by the emperor as a sign of imperial favor and when it was assumed by the Byzantines as an expression of

3. Further support comes from the fact that this title also appears in the titulature of both his son Arethas and his grandson Munḍir, as attested in inscriptions.<sup>24</sup> Jabala was thus probably the first Ghassānid king to assume the title of Flavius, a title that reflected his Byzantine connection<sup>25</sup> as did that of phylarch, while that of king, attested in Syriac by Zacharia, reflected his having received it by dynastic succession to the Ghassānid royal house.

4. The title must have had great impact on the Ghassānids and on his contemporaries, to the extent that it seems to have replaced his real name, Jabala.<sup>26</sup> He was referred to as al-Aṣḡar, reflecting his Byzantine connection and his personal loyalty to the emperor, so much so that in the Syriac source he appears as al-Aṣḡar/Aṣḡar. Many Ghassānid kings had epithets or nicknames following the same morphological pattern, such as al-A'raj and al-Ayham.

#### The Occasion

In addition to the problem of identification, the return of the Ghassānids to the service of Byzantium raises the question of its date and circumstances. In April 528 the Ghassānid Arethas returned with the other phylarchs and Roman commanders from his punitive expedition against the Lakhmid Munḍir. Malalas thus provides a helpful terminus ante quem, narrowing the margin of error. Since Zacharia does not say that the Ghassānids participated in the Byzantine counteroffensive against Nisibis and Thebetha in the summer of 527, the presumption is that by that date they had not returned.<sup>27</sup> Therefore they must have done so in the autumn of 527 or the winter of 528, just before joining the operation against Munḍir in spring 528.

What circumstances enabled or called for their return can only be surmised in view of the acceleration in the rhythm of events in this period, especially with the change of reigns and accession of Justinian first as co-emperor and then as sole emperor. Possibly the overtures for a return came from the Ghassānids. If their withdrawal and return in the reign of Justin II is

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loyalty to the emperor. The first was an honor conferred on distinguished citizens or allies; the second was assumed by subjects. Barbarian generals assumed the name Flavius as an expression of their alliance with the emperor and the state: see M. Waas, *Die Germanen im römischen Dienst im 4. Jh. n. Chr.* (Bonn, 1971), 36. Perhaps in Jabala's case it was conferred by the emperor as an expression of imperial favor and a desire to reconcile him. On Flavius see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *DOP* 26 (1972), 304–5; G. Rösch, *ONOMA ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ* (Vienna, 1978), 49–50; J. G. Keenan, "The Names Flavius and Aurelius," *ZPE* 11 (1973), 33–63; 13 (1974), 283–304. On Flavius applied to other Ghassānids, see below, 260, 294–297. Nöldeke was not clear about the title; see *GF*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> For these titles and inscriptions see below, 489–512.

<sup>25</sup> As Flavius, he was in company with his contemporaries Belisarius and Theodoric.

<sup>26</sup> Possibly because this titular distinction was a novelty and had not been conferred on a Ghassānid before; but see below, 509–11, on the Ghassānid Kathelogos.

<sup>27</sup> On the Byzantine counteroffensive against Thebetha and Nisibis, see Zacharia, *HE*, 62–63.

a parallel,<sup>28</sup> they would themselves have broached the possibility of return, having languished long enough in exile while the Persian Arabs, the Lakhmids, devastated Oriens. Also, after the death of Euphemia, Justin's wife, the influence of Theodora started to make itself felt, both after her marriage to Justinian and after her husband's accession when she was made augusta.<sup>29</sup> Since throughout her career she helped the Ghassānids, particularly Arethas around 540, she may well have inclined her husband favorably toward them around 527. We may also notice the Edict on Heretics<sup>30</sup> of 527 in this context. Though severe, it exempted the Goths from its strictures and confirmed their status as *foederati*.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the same exemption was implicitly applied to the Arab *foederati*.

Most important is the new orientation of foreign policy that came about with the accession of Justinian, especially in the conduct of the Persian war on the eastern front. War broke out in a more serious and dangerous fashion than in the reign of Justin, represented by the Lakhmid invasions: now it was a full-scale war involving the Persian army.<sup>32</sup> According to a Syriac source, Justinian himself was in Oriens, and if so must have become aware of the importance of the Arabs for the Byzantine war effort,<sup>33</sup> particularly in view of the Lakhmid Arabs' importance to the war effort of Persia.<sup>34</sup> The new ecclesiastical policy of Justinian, one of reconciliation between Dyophysites and Monophysites, was also beckoning. He began it upon his accession to the throne,<sup>35</sup> and it bore fruit when he allowed the exiled Monophysite bishops to return. This, of course, removed the main stumbling block in the course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations and thus enabled the *foederati* to return to service. Though the bishops returned in 531,<sup>36</sup> preparations for their return must have

<sup>28</sup> On this see below, Chap. IV on the reign of Justin II.

<sup>29</sup> On Euphemia's opposition to the marriage of Justinian to Theodora, see C. Diehl, *Byzantine Empresses* (London, 1964), 50–51, and R. Browning, *Justinian and Theodora* (London, 1987), 40, where he dates Euphemia's death to 524. Vasiliev dated it to either 523 or 524; *Justin*, 98. Justinian married Theodora in 525; Browning, op. cit., 41.

<sup>30</sup> For the edict see Vasiliev, *Justin*, 241–50.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 170–71, where he speaks of both the Persians and the Arabs; Malalas, *Chronographia*, 423, speaking of only the Arabs. Both writers refer to events of the period when Justinian was co-emperor with his uncle.

<sup>33</sup> See below, Appendix I.

<sup>34</sup> Since they were native to the area; cf. the request of Sittas to Justinian for enlisting native Armenians in 528; Malalas, *Chronographia*, 430.

<sup>35</sup> Alarmed by Saracen raids in the first year of his co-emperorship, he appoints Hypatius as *magister militum per Orientem* to deal with them; *ibid.*, 423.

<sup>36</sup> Even much earlier, at the beginning of Justin's reign, when the Theopaschite formula attracted his attention as an instrument of reconciliation. In 527 he issued the decree in which he referred to the Theopaschite phrase "One of the Trinity has suffered in the flesh": *Codex Justinianus*, I.1.5, ed. Krüger, 6–7.

been made before then; hence the Ghassānids did not have to wait for official legislation enabling the bishops to return. They came back to the service sometime before the expedition against Mundir was dispatched, since their presence in it is surely attested.<sup>37</sup>

#### The Family of Jabala

Family tradition was strong among the Ghassānids, with royal succession among them being dynastic, from father to son. It is therefore important to know something about the family of this distinguished Ghassānid figure who dominated Arab-Byzantine relations for over a quarter of a century during three reigns. Since the sources are more informative on his family than for any other Ghassānid figure, one may work out a stemma which bears on certain problems in the history of the Ghassānids and their relationship with Byzantium.

1. Jabala.<sup>38</sup> In addition to his name and patronymic, Jabala son of Ḥārith, he is also known by his tecnonymic, Abū Shamir.<sup>39</sup> His *laqab* (nickname) was al-Aṣfar, as noted above, translating the Latin title Flavius.

2. His wife. There is some consensus in the Arabic sources that the famous Māriya was the wife of this Jabala<sup>40</sup> rather than of a later Ghassānid king.<sup>41</sup> This, if true, has a twofold significance. First, since according to the Arabic tradition she was a Kindite princess, her marriage to the Ghassānid Jabala confirms earlier data on the friendly relations between these two groups of *foederati*. Second, the name is either Greek, Maria, or Syriac, meaning "the lady":<sup>42</sup> either, especially the former, clearly implies attachment to Christianity, which Kinda must have adopted.

3. His sons. (a) It is attested in Greek sources that the famous Arethas of Justinian's reign was his son.<sup>43</sup> However, it had not been known that Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia around 530, was his son until this fact was attested by Sabaic epigraphy. The two sons appear at the court of the

<sup>37</sup> According to Zacharia, *HE*, 8.5, who says it happened in the fifth year of Justinian's reign. Bury dates it to about 529; *HLRE*, II, 375.

<sup>38</sup> Jabala was the namesake of the last Ghassānid king, Jabala ibn-al-Ayham, who fought at the battle of Yarmūk. It is noteworthy that "Jabala" is attested in the Greek sources more than any Arabic name except "Arethas" for Christian Arabs who emigrated to Anatolia after the Muslim Conquest. The last Ghassānid may have made the name popular, or bearers of it may have been related to him.

<sup>39</sup> Established by Nöldeke, *GF*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22, to which add Hishām al-Kalbī himself; see his *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 618.

<sup>41</sup> As argued by Nöldeke, *GF*, 23; see also Aigrain, "Arabie," cols. 1202-3.

<sup>42</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>43</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

South Arabian ruler Abraha in Maʿrib, with their patronymic "son of Jabala."<sup>44</sup> With the two most distinguished Ghassānid phylarchs of Justinian's reign being established as both Jabala's sons, of the same house, many historical problems become clearer. (b) Shamir: Jabala's *teconymic*, "father of Shamir,"<sup>45</sup> clearly implies that he had a son by that name, in particular his eldest son. The sources are silent on him. He must have died by 530, since about that time his brother Arethas was made king by Justinian and succeeded Jabala. Since sons fought in battles with their fathers, he might have died with Jabala at the battle of Thannūris.<sup>46</sup>

## II. THE EXPEDITION AGAINST MUNDIR, WINTER 528

Malalas' own words succinctly tell the story of this episode in Arab-Byzantine relations.

In that year it happened that enmity developed between the *dux* of Palestine Diomedes, a *silentarius*, and the phylarch Arethas. Arethas took fright and went to the inner *limes* towards India. On learning this Alamoundaros, the Persian Saracen, attacked the Roman phylarch, captured him and killed him, for he had 30,000 men with him. On learning this, the emperor Justinian wrote to the *duces* of Phoenice, Arabia and Mesopotamia and to the phylarchs of the provinces to go after him and pursue him and his army. There set out at once the phylarch Arethas, Gnoupas, Naaman, Dionysios *dux* of Phoenice, John *dux* of Euphratesia, and the chiliarch Sebastianus with their military force. Learning of this Alamoundaros the Saracen fled to Indian territory with the Saracen force that he had. The Roman *duces* and phylarchs went in with an accompanying force and, not finding him anywhere there, they set off toward Persian territory. They captured his camp and took prisoner a number of men, women and children, as many dromedaries as they found and other animals of various kinds. They burnt four Persian fortresses, capturing the Saracens and Persians in them, and they returned victorious to Roman territory in the month of April of the 6th indiction.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> See BASIC II.

<sup>45</sup> It is a Sabaic name, a clear signal that the Ghassānids, who came from the south, still remembered it; so is the name of the other son, Abū Karib/Ab-Karib, on whom see below, 124–30.

<sup>46</sup> As the Lakhmid Munḍir's son Nuḿān died fighting with his father at the battle of Callinicum; Malalas, *Chronographia*, 463. Whether ʿAmr, called *dux* by Malalas, who died in the same battle was the son or the brother of Arethas the Ghassānid is not clear; *ibid.* A son of Arethas the Ghassānid, who fought with his father against Munḍir the Lakhmid, was captured by the latter and sacrificed to al-ʿUzza, the Arabian Aphrodite; Procopius, *History*, II.xxviii.13. Another son died fighting with his father in 554; on both sons see below, 243–44.

<sup>47</sup> See *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. E. and M. Jeffreys and R. Scott (Melbourne, 1986), 252.

This is one of the most valuable passages in the *Chronographia* for reconstructing the history of the Ghassānids during the reign of Justinian,<sup>48</sup> and it illuminates the three major Arab groups involved in the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict of the sixth century: the Lakhmids, the Arab allies of Persia, and the two *foederati* of Byzantium, Kinda and Ghassān. The first Arethas named in the passage is the Kindite,<sup>49</sup> who quarreled with Diomedes *dux* of Palestine; the second, who took part in the expedition against Mundir, is the Ghassānid.<sup>50</sup> It is mainly with the Ghassānid profile of this passage that this section is concerned.<sup>51</sup>

First we may note that the emperor himself inspires the dispatch of the punitive expedition and writes personally to the dukes and the phylarchs. If this is literally true, it reflects Justinian's intense interest in the eastern front, perhaps owing to his personal acquaintance<sup>52</sup> with the danger presented by Mundir's aggressiveness. Arethas the Kindite had quarreled with the Roman duke of Palestine and left the service of Byzantium, but his death at the hands of the empire's enemy Mundir was a blow to the prestige of Byzantium among the Arabs of the Peninsula. Hence the determination of Justinian to avenge his death through an assertion of Roman power in northern Arabia.

The statement that Justinian himself wrote directly to the Roman dukes and the Arab phylarchs about the expedition is curious. One would have thought that this was a local provincial dispute that involved those higher in the military echelons in Oriens, the *magister militum per Orientem* or the *comes Orientis*. Thus Justinian's dispatch may reflect the personal interest he took in the Arethas episode or his own new administrative style in establishing direct contact with local commanders. If it is true that he wrote personally to the Arab phylarchs, it may bear on the fact that the Ghassānid phylarchate had recently been revived after it had lapsed during the reign of Justin; Justinian wanted to endow the newly restored phylarchs with a sense of their identity and importance and of the personal interest he took in the restoration.<sup>53</sup> This would be consonant with Justinian's pro-Ghassānid stance, shown in his conferring the extraordinary *Basilicia* on Arethas and continued throughout his reign.

<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately the parallel passage in Theophanes does not preserve the names of dukes and phylarchs and the data on the provinces that Malalas does; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 179.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. E. Chilmead in Malalas (Bonn ed.), commentary, p. 648.

<sup>50</sup> For the identification see the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," *JAOS* 75 (1955), 207.

<sup>51</sup> For the Kindite profile of this passage, see below, 148–55.

<sup>52</sup> On the possibility that Justinian visited the eastern front in Oriens just before he became sole emperor, see below, 171–72.

<sup>53</sup> In what language the emperor communicated with the Arab phylarchs is not stated. If they did not understand Greek or Latin, the imperial message must have been locally translated into Arabic for them.



The ducal and phylarchal components of the expeditionary force call for comment. As for the *duces*, two are assigned to their respective provinces: John to Euphratesia and Dionysios to Phoenicia Libanensis. The third Roman commander, Sebastian, does not have his province mentioned. Since the two named provinces belonged to the limitrophe, it is quite likely that Sebastian's did too, probably Arabia. Troops from these three limitrophe provinces would naturally have been chosen to deal with a situation that developed in northern Arabia. Diomedes, the *dux* of Palestine, was not one of them; perhaps he was cashiered.<sup>54</sup>

The military force these *duces* commanded is referred to by the chronographer as μετὰ τῆς στρατιωτικῆς βοθηείας. It is just possible that the term is used with technical accuracy to distinguish the regular Byzantine troops who were *stratiōtai* from the federate force assembled by the Arab phylarchs as a contingent in the expeditionary force. This may also be supported by the phrase "accompanying force," μετὰ βοθηείας συνεπομένης, which describes the federate contingent.<sup>55</sup>

One would have thought that a punitive expedition sent against an Arab chief who lived and operated beyond the Roman *limes* in Oriens would have been assigned exclusively to Arab troops, *foederati* employed by Byzantium for just such a purpose. Yet troops under three Roman commanders also participated. The explanation must lie in the fact that the dispatch of exclusively Arab troops would have given the impression that this was an inter-Arab feud, while in fact it was more than that. The major figure, Arethas the Kindite, had been a *foederatus* of Byzantium for a quarter of a century: hence the Byzantine involvement in dispatching Roman *stratiōtai* under two dukes and a chiliarch to punish Mundir for his murder reflects Roman concern and asserts Roman power and prestige in northern Arabia.

As to the *phylarchoi*, Malalas speaks of three Arab commanders, Arethas the phylarch, Gnouphas, and Naaman. Although here he calls only Arethas phylarch, it is certain that the other two were also phylarchs, since he had already spoken of Justinian's writing to "the phylarchs of the provinces." Although the Arabic names are garbled in the Greek text, they are clearly recognizable as Jafna and Na'mān or Nu'mān. These are clearly Ghassānid names, especially the former, remembering that Ghassānid dynasts are often called "the sons of Jafna."

What were these phylarchs' provinces? For Arethas it was Arabia, as attested by Procopius<sup>56</sup> on his elevation to the *Basileia* around 530. The provinces of the other two, Jafna and Na'mān, must be inferred. They could have

<sup>54</sup> Of these four, only the chiliarch Sebastian is attested later, at the battle of Thannūris; thus he fought with Arethas against Mundir and with Jabala at Thannūris.

<sup>55</sup> See Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 435.

<sup>56</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

been associate phylarchs with Arethas in the Provincia Arabia; but the chances are that they were assigned to other provinces, judging from Malalas' phrase "the phylarchs of the provinces." It is thus possible that they were the phylarchs of Phoenicia and Euphratesia respectively. In support of this view, one may refer to the fact that the account speaks of three Roman commanders and three Arab phylarchs. The presumption is that each Roman commander picked up the phylarch assigned to his province and marched with him.

However, against the idea of assigning the three phylarchs to the three provinces, it is difficult to believe that in this period the Ghassānids were represented in so northerly a province of Oriens as Euphratesia.<sup>57</sup> That was to come later, with Arethas' *Basileia*, and in the second half of the century during the reign of his son Munḍir. It is therefore more likely that the two Ghassānid phylarchs belonged to Phoenicia Libanensis, especially since Justinian in the first year of his reign effected important changes in the military administration of that province, assigning it two *duces*, stationed in Damascus and Palmyra, instead of one.<sup>58</sup> Justinian's novel on Phoenicia<sup>59</sup> establishes that more than one phylarch is attested there in the 530s, leading to the conclusion that he may also have raised the number of phylarchs in Phoenicia from one to two. The chances are that this arrangement goes back to his first regnal year, 527/28.<sup>60</sup>

As far as the rendezvous is concerned, the three provinces of Euphratesia, Phoenicia Libanensis, and Arabia represent a very long segment of the eastern *limes*. The question thus arises of where along this long frontier the provincial troops met before they marched against Munḍir. It is unlikely that they marched separately and met somewhere outside the *limes*. They must have come together somewhere in Oriens, but there is no way to determine exactly where. They could have met in the north, in Euphratesia, and marched along the Euphrates,<sup>61</sup> or in the Provincia Arabia where they defiled through Wādī Sirḥān to Dūmat al-Jandal, thence to seek Munḍir. Wādī Sirḥān was the gateway to Arabia, and, in the other direction, to Oriens. Or they could have assembled midway between, in the province of Phoenicia Libanensis through which Munḍir had raided, the very raids that prompted Justinian to reorganize the military administration of the province.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> A Ghassānid phylarch also named Jafna appears in northern Oriens later in the 6th century; see below, 554–56.

<sup>58</sup> On the two dukes see below, 172–74.

<sup>59</sup> See below, 198–200.

<sup>60</sup> It is noteworthy that Malalas assigns Justinian's reorganization of the military administration of Phoenicia Libanensis to October 527, i.e., a few months before the date of the anti-Munḍir expedition, which returned to Oriens in 528; *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 425–26.

<sup>61</sup> This may explain the inclusion of the *dux* of distant Euphratensis, along with the omission of the *dux* of Syria Secunda that lay between Euphratensis and Phoenicia Libanensis.

<sup>62</sup> See below, 172–74.



The destination targeted by the expeditionary force in its pursuit of Muṣṭafī is also a matter of conjecture. Greek authors use the vague phrase "the Indian parts or territories," referring to areas involving the Arabs in the Peninsula, the Himyarites, and the Ethiopians. In this context it is the Arabian area, where Arethas the Kindite fled, where Muṣṭafī sought him, and where Muṣṭafī the Lakhmid fled from the Roman force. Wherever this was in Arabia, it certainly was not in Persian territory, as is clear from the chronographer's language where he says that, after despairing of finding Muṣṭafī in the "Indian territories," the Roman-Arab force set off toward "Persian territory."<sup>63</sup>

"Persian territory" is more geographically precise than "Indian territory." From the description of what the Roman-Arab force did to Muṣṭafī and the Persians, it is possible to infer that the region involved was not very far from Muṣṭafī's jurisdiction. The account speaks of the capture of the "tents" of Muṣṭafī, and what of men and animals there was in them. It is hard to believe that this is a reference to Ḥīra, his capital. If this had been the case, such a military success would have been expressed by the chronographer in no ambiguous terms.<sup>64</sup> The reference must be to some military post of Muṣṭafī's.

Twice we find reference to the Persians, the four fortresses that were burned<sup>65</sup> together with the Persians in them. From Malalas' details, this must be a region in the defense of which Persians and Arabs collaborated, that is, the jurisdiction of Muṣṭafī, which was both Arab and Persian, partly the latter inasmuch as it was a sphere of indirect Persian rule and influence supervised by Muṣṭafī as a vassal king. However, since this jurisdiction was vast, extending to the Arabian side of the Persian Gulf, it is difficult to pinpoint the reference. But the nearer it was to the Roman frontier, the more likely it is that it was the region where the Roman-Arab army operated, since it is hard to believe that the Roman contingent would have penetrated as far into Arabia as the Persian Gulf.<sup>66</sup> Thus it is likely to have been not far from Ḥīra and the middle Euphrates. The fortresses themselves suggest such Persian or Perso-Arab establishments as Khandaq Sābūr, "the ditch of Shāpūr," and the two fortified palaces not far from Ḥīra, Khawarnaq and Sadīr.<sup>67</sup> The burning of the four Persian fortresses and the capture of the Persians who defended them were

<sup>63</sup> For more on Arethas the Kindite's destination after his quarrel with Diomedes, see below, 150–51.

<sup>64</sup> As was done by John of Ephesus when he reported Muṣṭafī the Ghassānid's capture of Ḥīra; see below, 380–81, 405, 435.

<sup>65</sup> It was easier for the Arabs to burn than to destroy the fortresses. Both the Ghassānid and the Lakhmid rulers burned enemy property and thus got the sobriquet of *Muḥarriq*, "the burner," on which see Rothstein, *DLH*, 95; T. Fahd, *Le panthéon de l'Arabie centrale à la veille de l'Hégire* (Paris, 1968), 129–31.

<sup>66</sup> In spite of Theophanes' statement that Muṣṭafī had retreated to a region "where none of the Romans have ever been": *Chronographia*, p. 179, line 22.

<sup>67</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 144–45.

clearly acts of war against Sasanid Persia itself. Perhaps this is what Byzantium was calculating when it sent the Roman contingent with the Arab in the expeditionary force. The war with Persia had broken out openly in the previous year, and Byzantium may have wanted the expedition to be not only an inter-Arab war of revenge but also a Byzantine offensive against Persia's southern flank, conducted not only by her Arab *foederati* but also by Roman *stratiōtai*.

Malalas has provided the historian of Arab-Byzantine relations with an account that is unusually rich in ducal and phylarchal data concerning the limitrophe in Oriens in the early years of Justinian's reign, and has also supplied the exact date of the expedition. Since the force returned victorious in April, the campaign must have started at least a month before that, that is, in March; it may thus be dated to February–March 528. The quarrel between the phylarch Arethas and the duke Diomedes may be assigned to the earlier winter months of 527/28.

The preceding analysis of the Malalas passage leads to the following observations. First, it is clear that federate power in Oriens early in the reign of Justinian was mainly Ghassānid: the three phylarchs who participated in the expedition were all such.<sup>68</sup> If either Jafna or Na'mān was the phylarch of Phoenicia, this implies that Ghassānid power extended into that area, and possibly into Euphratesia, as early as 528. Arethas' importance is already apparent at that date. The chronographer's language could imply that he was the principal phylarch among his colleagues. It is practically certain that he was the leader and guide of the whole force, since it was operating in terrain familiar to him and not to the Roman *duces*. He was to lead a similar Arab-Roman force in the second Persian war, when he invaded Assyria in 541.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, his father, Jabala, is conspicuous by his absence. Since he had been the foremost Arab ally of Byzantium for twenty-five years, and died later in the same year as the expedition, one may infer that he was too old to endure an arduous campaign in Inner Arabia pursuing an elusive enemy under difficult climatic conditions. It would have been natural for him to ask his son Arethas to perform that task, the very son he was grooming as his successor.<sup>70</sup>

The successful expedition is one of the background elements that explain Justinian's fateful decision shortly after to elevate Arethas to an extraordinary

<sup>68</sup> How Jafna and Nu'mān were related to Arethas is not clear; they were probably not his sons, but rather brothers or cousins. If the former, they could be placed in the stemma as members of the immediate family of Jabala and his sons.

<sup>69</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.xix.11–18; on a possible Roman-Arab expedition against Najrān in the 4th century, see *BAFOC*, 39–43.

<sup>70</sup> The delegation of authority is attested again in the Ghassānid camp. As Jabala sends his son against Mundir, so Arethas sends one of his generals to the region of Usays. See below, 122–23.

*Basileia* and supreme phylarchate. Arethas had been tested and had proved his worth. The success of the Roman-Arab operation against Mundir was the first attempt to combine phylarchal and ducal power for coping with such enemy tactics, instead of leaving it to individual phylarchs and dukes to do so, as Procopius explained.<sup>71</sup> We must also notice Malalas' phrase "the phylarchs of the provinces." This helps to illuminate phylarchal organization in Oriens, suggesting that each, or nearly each, province had its own phylarch or phylarchs, and that this institution had become a permanent feature of the Byzantine military structure in Oriens.

### III. THANNÜRIS, THE BATTLE OF THE DITCH, SUMMER 528

In the summer of 528 Justinian asked Belisarius, then commandant of Daras, to build the fortress of Minduos in the nearby desert of Thannüris, in Roman Mesopotamia, to protect the region against the marauding bands of the Saracens. The Persians tried to prevent him, sending an army of 30,000 commanded by Kawad's son Xerxes. A Roman army was mustered to meet the Persians, and when battle was joined the result was a Byzantine defeat in which several Byzantine commanders were killed or captured, though Belisarius escaped.<sup>72</sup> Since the Arabs participated in the battle of Thannüris, historical accounts of it contain significant information on the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, although these accounts have never been fully analyzed.

Procopius, Malalas, and Zacharia,<sup>73</sup> all contemporaries, have left accounts of the battle. That of the first being quite sketchy, it will be those of the other two that will be analyzed for data on the Ghassānids' contribution. They are found to be complementary. Malalas provides data establishing links with the expedition against Mundir earlier in the year, namely, the participation of the dukes of Lebanon and of Sebastian, the chiliarch.<sup>74</sup> Above all, he gives Tapharas/Aşfar/Jabala<sup>75</sup> his correct title in the Byzantine army, that of phylarch.<sup>76</sup> Zacharia is more informative on the Persians' winning tactics—the use of trenches—and on how the Arab phylarch met his fate. Above all, he assesses his military worth in his obituary notice.

<sup>71</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.45–47.

<sup>72</sup> For an account of the battle see Bury, *HLRE*, II, 81, and Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 264–65. Stein hardly noticed it (*HBE*, 283).

<sup>73</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xiii.1–8; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 441–42; Zacharia, *HE*, 63–64.

<sup>74</sup> On the dukes of Lebanon see below, Appendix II.

<sup>75</sup> On the identification see above, 63–65.

<sup>76</sup> Jabala appears in Malalas as "Tapharas, the phylarch," his true function in the military hierarchy of Byzantine Oriens, while Zacharia gave him his title "king of the Arabs" within the royal Ghassānid dynastic context. Notwithstanding his kingship over Ghassān, Jabala was officially a phylarch, as was Arethas, who is so termed by Theophanes in describing his visit to Constantinople in 563 (see below, 282–83).

As related in Zacharia's account, after the Persians heard that the Byzantines had mustered a force to meet them:<sup>77</sup>

. . . they devised a stratagem and dug several ditches among their trenches and concealed them all around the outside by triangular stakes of wood, and left several openings. And when the army came up, they did not perceive the Persians' deceitful stratagem in time, but the generals entered the Persians' entrenchment at full speed, and, falling into the pits, they were taken prisoners, and Cutzes was killed. And of the Roman army, those who were mounted turned back and returned in flight to Dara with Belisarius; but the infantry who did not escape were killed and taken captive. And Atafar, the Saracen king, during his flight . . . perished.<sup>78</sup>

When the two authors' accounts are combined, the following facts about the Ghassānid participation emerge. Jabala, who is referred to by name along with the other commanders, joined the Byzantine army as the phylarch of the Arab contingent of *foederati*. In Malalas his name is associated with that of Belisarius. Clearly the Arab contingent was composed of cavalry, what they always were as a tactical unit in the army of Oriens. The mounted Jabala attacked the Persians along with his fellow commanders. When he saw he was approaching a Persian entrenchment with ditches, he turned back, together with Belisarius and the other cavalry, but his horse stumbled and threw him, killing him.<sup>79</sup> Zacharia concludes this section by singling out Jabala/Atfar for a eulogy: "And he was a warlike and an able man, and he had much experience in the use of Roman arms, and in various places he won distinction and renown in war."<sup>80</sup>

One may ask whether the Ghassānids were represented only by Jabala at this battle. This is unlikely; it may be argued that others also participated. While Malalas refers to Jabala by the technical term "phylarch," Zacharia calls him "king of the Arabs." If the king of the Ghassānids, the chief phylarch in Byzantium's employ, marched to Thannūris, it is unlikely that the junior phylarchs, Malalas' "phylarchs of the provinces," would not have joined him. One may recall the account of the expedition against Mundir earlier in the

<sup>77</sup> *Chronicle*, trans. Hamilton and Brooks, 223–24.

<sup>78</sup> The account of Jabala's death is confused in the Syriac of Zacharia, hence the ellipsis at the end; the Greek of Malalas clearly explains how he died in a riding accident in battle. Malalas makes possible a return to Zacharia's Syriac for emending the text; see below, Appendix III.

<sup>79</sup> Arab and Byzantine horsemen did not yet use stirrups; if they had, stumbling horses might not have thrown their riders off. For the Ghassānid *foederati* and the stirrup, see below, 572–78.

<sup>80</sup> For an analysis of the obituary notice, see above, 65–66.

year, in which three members of the Ghassānid family—Arethas, Naṣmān, and Jafna—took part.<sup>81</sup> The battle of Callinicum in 531 also provides a parallel. Since the campaign against Mundir had been a success, participants in it would likely have been called upon to join in the Thannūris campaign, as we know was the case for the dukes of Lebanon and the chiliarch Sebastian. If so, the same may be predicated of the Arab participants, one or all of the Ghassānid phylarchs. This is particularly likely in view of the prominence accorded the dukes of Phoenicia in the account of the battle. As argued before,<sup>82</sup> they probably took the phylarchs of Lebanon with them in the earlier operation, and it is likely that they did the same for the Thannūris campaign.

In view of the fact that the next year, 529, Arethas was elevated to the Ghassānid *Basileia*, it is unlikely that he did not participate in the Thannūris campaign. In view of his distinction in the earlier expedition and his father Jabala's advanced age, the latter probably took his son with him to demonstrate the future king's military competence,<sup>83</sup> on the basis of which he could be recommended for the succession and accepted by the Romans. Thus the chances are that several Arab phylarchs other than Jabala participated in the Thannūris campaign, especially since the terrain and climate of Mesopotamia in the summer were easier for the Arabs.

Jabala's death at the battle of Thannūris came about as a result of the Persians' entrenchment tactics. This device was first used by the Ephthalite Huns against the Persian king Pērōz in central Asia in 484.<sup>84</sup> The Persians borrowed the tactic from the Huns and used it against the Byzantines at Thannūris in 528; then Belisarius borrowed it from the Persians and used it at the battle of Daras in 530.<sup>85</sup> Since the Arabs saw their king die at Thannūris as a result of it, they too must have learned its lesson. Whether it was they who passed it on to the Arabs of Ḥijāz is not clear.<sup>86</sup> A hundred years later, in 627, Muḥammad used it against the Meccans who had attacked him in Medina, thereby turning the tide of battle in what came to be known as the "Battle of the Ditch."<sup>87</sup> The Persian provenance of the tactic is preserved in

<sup>81</sup> See above, 72–73.

<sup>82</sup> On the two dukes and the two phylarchs, see above, 71–73.

<sup>83</sup> Even without the *Basileia* in mind, Jabala would have taken his son with him to battle, as Arethas was to do; one died in the 540s, the other in the 550s, in battles with Mundir; see below, 238–39.

<sup>84</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.iv.7–8.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xiii.13–15.

<sup>86</sup> This Persian tactic was surely known to the Lakhmids, Persia's Arab clients, and it is possible that it was they who made it known in Arabia. For the Lakhmid presence in Ḥijāz, see *BASIC II*. The Ghassānid presence in Ḥijāz in the 6th century is well established; see *ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> See P. K. Hitti, *A History of the Arabs* (London, 1970), 117. According to the Arabic tradition, it was a Persian convert to Islam, Salmān al-Fārisī, who suggested to Muḥammad digging a trench round Medina.

the Arabic word for "ditch," *kbandaq*, from the Pahlavi *kandak* through Aramaic.

#### IV. MUNDIR'S INVASION OF SYRIA PRIMA, MARCH 529

The year 529 witnessed two operations in which the Arabs, Lakhmid and Ghassānid, were involved: Munder's invasion of Syria Prima and the Samaritan revolt.<sup>88</sup> The two may have been related.

#### A

In March<sup>89</sup> Munder invaded Syria Prima with a force composed of both Persians and Arabs. The Lakhmid king plundered the Byzantine province as far as the borders of Antioch, at a place called Litargon and the estates of Skathapai, where he killed many people. He also burned the territory outside Chalcedon, the Sermian estate, and the Cynegian country.<sup>90</sup> When the Roman exarchs heard of this, they went out to meet him; but when he became aware of this, he collected all the booty and prisoners and fled across the inner *limes*.<sup>91</sup>

The account of Munder's invasion given by the two chronographers answers to Procopius' description of the Lakhmid king and his style in war, recounting the speed and suddenness of his attacks and his penchant for looting, slaughtering, burning, and taking prisoners.<sup>92</sup> We may observe, first, that this invasion has all the appearance of a campaign undertaken to avenge the punitive expedition sent by Justinian against Munder in the winter of the preceding year. The deep penetrations into Byzantine territory Munder effected are comparable to the way the Byzantine expedition reached not only Lakhmid territory but also Persian territory and possibly even the environs of Hira itself.

The invasion of 529 targeted Syria Prima, rather than Phoenicia which Munder had attacked in 527, in a campaign that brought him to the outskirts of Emesa. Possibly the fortification of Palmyra and reorganization of the military administration of Phoenicia discouraged Munder from again invading the now alert and combat-ready province. We may also note that Munder led a

<sup>88</sup> Theophanes' detailed account is the main source here: *Chronographia*, 178; also Malalas (Bonn ed.), 445.

<sup>89</sup> Theophanes specifies 20 March. As the invasion took place near the vernal equinox, it was clearly the Arabic *raba' iyya*, the spring campaign, documented in Arabic poetry and in Sabaic epigraphy. See BASIC II.

<sup>90</sup> On these places see Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 492–93 note 820. "Chalcedon" is Chalcis (Qinnasrīn), near which Munder was to fall in battle in 554; the Sermian estate is present-day Sarmin; and Litargon is Litarbai in Ammianus, present-day al-Tarīb.

<sup>91</sup> Instead of Theophanes' "inner *limes*," Malalas has "outer *limes*"; *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 445, line 6. On these two phrases, see below and BASIC II.

<sup>92</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.41–44. On the fate of the prisoners taken by Munder in this campaign, see below, 80–82.



force consisting not only of his Saracens but also of Persian troops, reflecting the fact that this was not just a Lakhmid war against Byzantium but a Persian war, with the Persians placing confidence in Mundir's military competence and well-known qualities of leadership. As Justinian's expedition attacked both Lakhmid and Persian territory, so both Lakhmids and Persians here attacked Byzantium.

We must thereupon inquire about the whereabouts of the Ghassānids, who were established in Oriens for the express purpose of warding off such an Arab danger from outside the *limes*. While the Ghassānids were based in the south of Oriens, in Arabia, Mundir invaded in the far north so suddenly that there would have been little or no time to call upon allies in Arabia or Phoenicia.<sup>93</sup> Thus Mundir's successful invasion of Syria Prima may be viewed as one of the proximate causes for the appointment of the Ghassānid Arethas to the extraordinary *Basileia*.<sup>94</sup>

The Byzantine response to Mundir's invasion came as soon as Justinian heard of it. He immediately sent a Byzantine force that invaded Saracen and Persian territory.<sup>95</sup> The two chronographers' brief statements do not mention the Ghassānids as having taken part in the retaliatory expedition. If this silence is significant, it might imply that the extraordinary *Basileia* had not been conferred on the most eligible Ghassānid phylarch, Arethas, by April 529, but was to come shortly thereafter. For his part, Procopius does not relate the military operations of 529 at all: this omission is striking in a detailed account by an eyewitness; it takes its place beside his other omissions.

## B

Under the year 530 Malalas includes an account of the harsh treatment Mundir meted out to prisoners of war he had captured in Byzantine territory. He gave them a period of sixty days during which they were to send a ransom petition to the Roman state, agreeing to do so "after Taizanes the Saracen chief had interceded in their behalf." The money was collected and the prisoners ransomed.<sup>96</sup> Malalas' account deserves further scrutiny on a number of points.

His account fits best under the year 530 in spite of his having crowded

<sup>93</sup> On the possibility that Phoenicia had two Ghassānid phylarchs, see Appendix II below. The Ghassānid phylarchs' non-participation in retaliation for a Perso-Lakhmid invasion of Syria Prima could suggest that Euphratensis (a contiguous province) did not have a Ghassānid phylarch, as has been suggested; cf. above, 73.

<sup>94</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.43-47; and below, 95-96.

<sup>95</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 445; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 178, who gives the precise month, April. On the Phrygian foot soldiers in this expedition, called the Lykokranitai, see Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 495 note 836.

<sup>96</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 460-61.

into that year the battle of Callinicum, in fact a misdating (it took place in April 531), and having fitted the story of Mundir and the prisoners in just before it. Ephraim, patriarch of Antioch, is involved in this affair, but his patriarchate spanned the years 527–545 and thus gives this event no further precision. It must fall between 530 and 531, since the Byzantine prisoners are not likely to have languished in Lakhmid captivity for more than a year. A one-year interval is inferred from identifying the captives in this account with those taken by Mundir in his 529 invasion of Syria Prima, as far as the environs of Antioch. While Malalas mentions the invasion, more detailed information comes from Theophanes, who speaks specifically of prisoners he captured, unlike Malalas.<sup>97</sup> This is the background against which Malalas' passage must be set, especially since it was to Antioch, to the patriarch Ephraim, that the petition was sent. Although Malalas speaks of a petition to the Roman state, ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαίων πολιτείᾳ,<sup>98</sup> it was sent to the *ecclesia*, not to the *imperium*: to the patriarch, not the *magister militum* at Antioch. Perhaps it was thought to be beneath the dignity of the Roman state to offer ransom money. In any case, ecclesiastics played an important role in Byzantine diplomacy in the Orient in this period. Since the prisoners came from the region of Antioch, some of them may have been known to the patriarch personally, hence the petition went to him.

Malalas provides an important statement on Taizanes, the Arab chief who interceded on the prisoners' behalf: ἀντιφωνήσαντος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν Ταϊζάνου τοῦ ἀρχιφύλου Σαρακηνῶν.<sup>99</sup> Who was Taizanes? He could have been the chief of a tribe allied to the Lakhmids, or a commander, a phylarch in Mundir's army. Malalas does not use the normal term φύλαρχος but rather ἀρχίφυλος (*archiphyllos*). This may have some significance, since in referring to the Byzantine office of phylarch, Ghassānid and Kindite, he does use the former term. What we notice is that this chief was ready to intercede for Christian prisoners. The presumption is that he too was a Christian, and hence was ready to extend help and sympathy to his co-religionists. The sources attest to Christians and Christian chiefs in the army of Mundir.<sup>100</sup> The Greek Ταϊζάνης reflects the Arabic name Ḍayzan, an archaic Arabic name attested in the Arab area of the eastern half of the Fertile Crescent.<sup>101</sup> This episode recalls a similar one that the Arabic sources recount as taking place in Mundir's Ḥīra, that of Ḥanzāla and Sharīk. Ḥanzāla asked Mundir, who

<sup>97</sup> See above, 79.

<sup>98</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 15–16.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 18–19.

<sup>100</sup> For the Christian chief in Mundir's army see the present writer in "Conference of Ramla," 119 and note 19.

<sup>101</sup> For the name see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 35 note 1.



wanted to have him killed, for leave to go and say goodbye to his family, promising to return. Sharik acted as his surety, and Ḥanzala returned just in time.<sup>102</sup> Malalas' story of the prisoners in Mundir's jail shows that taking prisoners was a profitable activity.

#### V. THE SAMARITAN REVOLT OF 529

In June 529 the Samaritans in Palestine revolted.<sup>103</sup> The revolt started in Scythopolis, in Palaestina Secunda, where they set many parts of the city on fire and crowned the bandit chief Julian as ruler. After burning estates and killing Christians, they entered Neapolis, where Julian ill-treated the bishop of the city. Malalas' account of the course of the revolt after it reached Neapolis is detailed and of interest.

When the governors of Palestine and the *dux* Theodoros, the snub-nosed, learnt of this, they immediately reported the daring rebel to the emperor Justinian. The *dux* set out against Julian with a large force, taking with him the phylarch of Palestine. On learning of this Julian, the Samaritan rebel, fled from Neapolis. The *dux* pursued him with his force, and they joined battle. The *dux* cut down a large number of the Samaritans and captured the Samaritan Julian, whom God delivered into his hands. He beheaded Julian and sent his head with the diadem to the emperor Justinian. When the emperor learnt about the rebellion of the Samaritans and the ill-fated Julian, the information from the governors arrived at Constantinople at the same time as the rebel leader's head. 20,000 of the Samaritans fell in the battle. Some of them fled to the mountain known as Garizim, and others to Trachon, to what is known as the Iron Mountain. The Saracen phylarch of the Romans took 20,000 boys and girls as booty from the Samaritans; he took these as prisoners and sold them in Persian and Indian territory.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Although the story is embroidered in the Arabic sources, it does not have to be rejected or dismissed as a *topos*. See R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, 1941), 44; and the present writer's review of *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, I, in *JAOS* 106 (1986), 536. Malalas' account is an independent witness to the fact that such an episode did take place in pre-Islamic times.

<sup>103</sup> For recent work see A. D. Crown, "The Samaritans in the Byzantine Orbit," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 69 (1986), 96–138; K. G. Holum, "Caesarea and the Samaritans," in R. L. Hohlfelder, ed., *City, Town and Countryside in the Early Byzantine Era* (Boulder, Colo., 1982), 65–73, both with bibliography. On the sources for the revolt of 529, see Stein, *HBE*, 288 note 4. For other studies on the Arab involvement in this revolt, see below, note 106.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted from *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffreys and Scott, 261; for the Greek, Bonn ed., 446–47. The English translators point out that there is an equivalent passage for *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 446, lines 13–17 in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De Insidiis*, and it is hard to reconcile the two; see *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffreys and Scott, xxxiii. The divergence of the two passages does not affect the discussion of the role of the Arabs in the revolt. Here we follow Malalas' text (*Chronicle*, xxxii), not the excerpt.

Relevant to Arab-Byzantine relations, we learn from Malalas' account that an Arab phylarch, whose name is not given by the chronographer, took part in the Samaritan revolt's suppression: he is described as "the phylarch of Palestine," τὸν φύλαρχον Παλαιστίνης. He marched with the *dux* of Palestine, Theodore, against the Samaritans, and got perhaps the lion's share of the spoils of the revolt, twenty thousand boys and girls as prisoners of war, whom he sold in the Persian and Indian territories. The fate of those prisoners was most important in the history of the Semitic Orient,<sup>105</sup> though the more immediate problem is that of the identity of this phylarch. Was he Arethas the Ghassānid, or his brother Abū Karib? Were one or more phylarchs involved in the suppression of the revolt?<sup>106</sup> It will be argued that Arethas did participate in the war effort against the Samaritans, but Abū Karib's participation cannot be excluded. The Arab federate contribution to this operation was certainly Ghassānid.

#### Abū Karib

In support of the participation of Abū Karib, it is true that he qualifies to be described by Malalas' phrase "the phylarch of Palestine." The other to whom this phrase applies, Arethas the Kindite, had died the year before.<sup>107</sup> Since the chronographer states that the *dux* of Palestine marched against the Samaritans taking the phylarch of Palestine with him,<sup>108</sup> this could imply that the phylarch was stationed near the *dux* in the province. Although the *dux* of Palestine's headquarters are unknown, it is possible that he was stationed in Palaestina Tertia, where most of the military units for the defense of Palestine were located.<sup>109</sup> Since Abū Karib was the phylarch of or in Palaestina Tertia, it

<sup>105</sup> See below, 92–95.

<sup>106</sup> Nöldeke (*GF*, 11–12) first tried to identify the unnamed Arab phylarch as Arethas; others have favored Abū Karib or else two phylarchs. See Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1203; Stein, *HBE*, 187–88; F. M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine* (Paris, 1952), II, 356–57; the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," 207–9; Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 496 note 839; R. Paret, "Notes sur une passage de Malalas concernant les phylarches arabes," *Arabica* 5 (1958), 251–62; S. Winkler, "Die Samariter in den Jahren 529/530," *Klio* 43–45 (1965), 444–45. Some of these discussions overlooked the tripartite division of Palestine. We are also hampered by lack of exact data on identification of persons and on locations of commands. Justinian's Novel 103 on Palestine of 536 and the *Panegyrics* of Choricus of Gaza describe the situation in the following decade, presenting a picture that may be at least in part a result of the events of 529. For more on the latter see below, 182–94.

<sup>107</sup> His successor Qays the Kindite became phylarch of Palestine just after June 529. The phylarchs of the Parembole were too weak for such a campaign; moreover, if they had taken part, their admirer Cyril of Scythopolis, a Chalcedonian, would have recorded it. For more on this see below, 91–92.

<sup>108</sup> . . . λαβὼν μετ' ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὸν φύλαρχον Παλαιστίνης; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 446, lines 15–16. This provides evidence for the phylarchal system in Oriens.

<sup>109</sup> And yet a paragraph in cap. 2 of the novel could imply that his headquarters were not far from Caesarea, the capital of Palaestina Prima, residence of the civil governor. The emperor forbids the *dux* to interfere with the latter's work, e.g., civil cases and the disbursement of

makes sense to say that the *dux* who was in that region picked up his phylarch and marched with him against the Samaritans.

There are, however, objections to this view. It is not clear whether Abū Karib was already in the employ of Byzantium by June 529, the date of the Samaritan revolt. Procopius is not specific on his appointment, which is placed approximately around 530. However, this *argumentum ex silentio* could not carry weight in view of the fact that the Ghassānids including Abū Karib had returned to the service of Byzantium in 528. There is also a geographical objection, based on the large size and unusual shape of Palaestina Tertia, divided into three regions, North Ḥijāz (the Ḥismā region), Sinai, and the Negev, all of which may not have been under one phylarch. Abū Karib is called the lord of the palm grove, Procopius' Phoinikōn, which was ten days' journey from the Byzantine border. One presumes that with the extension of Byzantine rule and influence to Phoinikōn, which Abū Karib was to cede to the empire, he remained principally the phylarch of that part of Palaestina Tertia that comprised northern Ḥijāz and the other side of Wādī 'Araba,<sup>110</sup> in other words being too far away from the scene of the action then unfolding in Samaria, in Palaestina Prima. The dangerous situation created by the revolt required the quick harnessing of federate power to quell it, power that was closer to Samaria than the Trans-'Araban portion of Palaestina Tertia. Though this makes Abū Karib's participation doubtful, it remains a possibility, at least in the last stage of selling some of the prisoners in "the Indian territory."

#### Arethas

While Abū Karib's participation in quelling the Samaritan revolt is uncertain, there is no doubt about that of Arethas. Support for this contention comes from the accounts of both Malalas and Zacharia of Mytilene, the latter not having figured largely in this discussion. It is certain that Arethas was at this time the phylarch of both the Provincia Arabia and Palaestina Secunda. His phylarchate over Arabia is explicitly stated by Procopius,<sup>111</sup> while that over Palaestina Secunda can be safely inferred. The base of Ghassānid power, its chief camp and headquarters, was al-Jābiya in the Gaulanitis, known as such around 520 when Simeon of Bēth-Arshām found Jabala, Arethas' father,

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taxes; this could suggest that the *dux* also resided in Prima although his military units were stationed in Tertia. The time disparity, however, may stand in the way of this argument. For the novel, see below, 200–206.

<sup>110</sup> Procopius expressly states that Justinian made Abū Karib the phylarch of the Saracens in Palestine: καὶ αὐτὸν βασιλεὺς φύλαρχον τῶν ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ Σαρακηνῶν κατεστήσατο; Procopius, *History*, I.xix.10. Which Palestine, though, is not specified. One may compare the case of Amorkesos in the 5th century: *BAFIC*, 82–92. For more on Abū Karib and the possibility of his rule over Sinai, see below, 127–30.

<sup>111</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

in that camp-town and wrote therefrom his letter on the martyrs of Najrān.<sup>112</sup> After Jabala's death at the battle of Thannūris, his most eligible son, Arethas, succeeded to his position and power and thus was based, as his father had been, in both Arabia and Palaestina Secunda. Thus Malalas' phrase "the phylarch of Palestine" could easily describe Arethas, the phylarch of Palaestina Secunda.<sup>113</sup>

The seriousness of the revolt and its violence called for quick action. Since the forces stationed in Palaestina Prima were inadequate, the nearest province that could provide the rapid action required was Arabia, just across the Jordan, where the phylarch who had just done so well in the expedition against Mundir was stationed. It was therefore natural for the *dux* of Palestine to call on the phylarch nearest to Scythopolis and Neapolis, namely, Arethas, ready with troops ideal for fighting in the mountainous terrain of Samaria.

During what may have been a second phase of the revolt, some of the Samaritans fled across the Jordan to Trachonitis, to what is known as the Iron Mountain; this may also simply have been the flight of the beaten Samaritans to refuge in an inaccessible region. If it is construed as a second phase of the revolt, Arethas would have been involved, since Trachonitis/Iron Mountain fell within his province of Arabia.

One important source for the Samaritan revolt, Cyril of Scythopolis, is strikingly silent on the Ghassānid's role in the suppression of the revolt.<sup>114</sup> As Cyril was a Chalcedonian who detested the Monophysites and the phylarch who belonged to that confession, his silence might be indirect evidence for Arethas' participation. His dislike for Arethas appears in his recounting a quarrel between him and another phylarch named al-Aswad, from which the country suffered.<sup>115</sup>

We must now consider the evidence of Zacharia, a contemporary writer who was in Oriens at the time in question. He explicitly states that both the Roman force under the *dux* and the Saracens of Arabia marched together against the Samaritans.<sup>116</sup> This evidence from Zacharia clearly assigns the Sar-

<sup>112</sup> *Martyrs*, 63.

<sup>113</sup> The *dux* of Palestine is described as having "taken with him" the phylarch, which may complicate matters for this argument depending on where the *dux*'s residence may have been, when his field of operation was the outlying district of the *limes* in the south. Cf. above, note 109.

<sup>114</sup> *Kyrrillos*, 171-72.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. above, note 107.

<sup>116</sup> Zacharia says "et congregati sunt et dux regionis qui cum eo erat, et exercitus Romanorum et Ṭayāyê qui in Arabia sunt; et contra Samaritanos advenerunt" (*HE*, 70). Here Ṭayāyê is the regular Syriac word for Saracens. Nöldeke did not make positive use of Zacharia's evidence for his identification; see *GF*, 11-12. He was concentrating on Malalas' description of the Arab chief as the "phylarch of Palestine," not taking into account Zacharia's mention of the Provincia Arabia, Arethas' province.

acen contingent of *foederati* to the Provincia Arabia, Arethas' province, and clearly documents his participation in the first phase of the Roman counter-offensive against the Samaritans, while they were still fighting in Samaria before fleeing to Trachonitis. Zacharia thus complements Malalas: the latter gives Palestine as the province from which the phylarch marched, and the former gives Arabia. Between them they thus give a combined clue to the identity of the phylarch, the only one to have a double appointment, namely, Arethas, the phylarch of Arabia and Palaestina Secunda.

#### The Course of the Revolt

Malalas presents the Samaritan campaign as having two phases: the first commanded by the *dux* Theodore, the second by the *dux* Eirenaios. His account of the second phase runs:

When the emperor learnt that the Samaritans had burnt many estates in Palestine at the start of their rebellion, he was angry with the *dux* of Palestine for not having proceeded against them and scattered them as soon as he heard that they were gathering, before their attack on the estates and the city. He relieved the *dux* of his office with ignominy and ordered him to be kept under strict guard. Eirenaios the Antiochene was sent as *dux* in his place. He set out against the Samaritans who still remained in the mountains and killed many of them, exacting a harsh vengeance.<sup>117</sup>

Though Malalas does not mention the Arab *foederati* or their phylarch in his account of the second phase, it is practically certain that the Ghassānid phylarch took part in it, in view of the fact that it involved operations against those who had survived the first campaign and were hiding out in what the chronographer calls "the mountains." In his account of the first phase, Malalas had referred to two mountains, one in Cis-Jordania in Garizim near Neapolis and the other the Trachonitis/"Iron Mountain" in Trans-Jordania. His use of the plural "mountains," ὄρεσι,<sup>118</sup> suggests that the operation involved the two mountains on both sides of the Jordan. If so, Arethas must have taken part at least in the one directed against Trachonitis, which lay within his province of Arabia, and probably took part in the other as well.

It is not clear whether the twenty thousand prisoners of war he acquired were taken during the first or the second phase—perhaps more in the first and fewer in the second. They are referred to after the conclusion of the first phase directed by Theodore, the phase in which the Arab phylarch is explicitly stated to have participated. More important is the manner in which he dis-

<sup>117</sup> *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffreys and Scott, 261; for the Greek, Bonn ed., p. 447, lines 13–21.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, line 21. On the mountains, see below, 88–89.

posed of these prisoners. Malalas says that he sold them "in Persian and Indian territory";<sup>119</sup> one must ask what this phrase means and why they were sold there.

Though "Persian territory" is clear enough, "Indian territory" is not, since the vague term "Indian" can refer to various regions, such as India proper, the Arabian Peninsula (especially the Red Sea littoral), Ethiopia, or roughly the Red Sea area. We may eliminate the first; the chances are that he sold some of the prisoners in the Red Sea region, most probably Ethiopia.<sup>120</sup> Arethas' jurisdiction lay further from the Red Sea than that of his brother Abū Karib: he may thus have given some of the prisoners to his brother, who sold them on both sides of the Red Sea, in Arabia and Ethiopia, seeing that he himself may have taken part in the Iron Mountain campaign. Why were Samaritan prisoners sold in such distant countries? Probably because of the imperial governor's efforts to rid the Holy Land of a sect that had caused so much trouble. Imperial legislation had recently imposed heavy disabilities on them, and the war had decimated their ranks. Leaving them in federate hands along the borders of Palestine would have left them dangerously near the Holy Land where they would want to return, while banishing them to a distant land such as Ethiopia would ensure that they were far enough away to assimilate to their new environment.

#### The Ghassānid Contribution

A close reading of Malalas' account and knowledge of Ghassānid history at this stage leads one to think that the Ghassānids contributed considerably to quelling the Samaritan revolt. Although Theodore was cashiered by Justinian at the end of the first phase of the campaign, Arethas the phylarch was not: he remained in Byzantium's service and almost immediately afterward was promoted to the extraordinary *Basileia*, a sure sign that the government was pleased with his performance. The nature of the war against the Samaritans also points up the Ghassānid contribution. Regular Roman troops, used to fighting pitched battles, were not as well trained as Arethas' Arab *foederati* to deal with rebels entrenched in difficult, mountainous terrain like Samaria and in an arid climate like that of Trachonitis. For the Ghassānids these were ideal war conditions, making it probable that they bore the brunt of the fighting.

The number of prisoners taken in this campaign, even if Malalas' figures are exaggerated and must be reduced, was high.<sup>121</sup> Since the Romans would not have handed them over to the federates, the latter must have captured

<sup>119</sup> Ἐν τοῖς Περσικοῖς καὶ Ἰνδικοῖς μέρεσι; *ibid.*, lines 11–12.

<sup>120</sup> Further on this see below, 92–95.

<sup>121</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 445, lines 20–21. Procopius overstates the number of casualties at 100,000; see *Anecdota*, XI.29.



them themselves, attesting to their efficiency in the war effort. Perhaps the events of the early 520s in Najrān<sup>122</sup> contributed to the Ghassānids' eagerness to enter the campaign. The memory of the martyrs of Najrān, their relatives, was still fresh, and possibly they identified or associated Jews with Samaritans.<sup>123</sup>

Although the participation of Ghassānids other than Arethas in this campaign remains problematic, the point is that the war redounded to the glory of the Ghassānid dynasty. Arethas' achievements in the Samaritan campaign served to promote him in Justinian's eyes to the point where the emperor conferred the extraordinary *Basileia* upon him, since the first event apparently preceded the second.

#### Trachonitis and the Iron Mountain

Three mountains are named prominently in the accounts of the Samaritan revolt: Garizim in Cis-Jordania, and Trachonitis and the Iron Mountain in Trans-Jordania. Of the last two, Trachonitis is a well-known, well-defined lava region in the north, in the eastern part of the Provincia Arabia between Batanaea in the west and Auranitis in the south.<sup>124</sup> As its name (from the Greek *trachys*, "rough") indicates, it was a rugged, savage, inaccessible region;<sup>125</sup> hence it became a place of refuge (cf. Arabic *al-Lajā*), making the Samaritans' flight there understandable. How they succeeded in getting there from Samaria is unclear, but if Jews did participate in their revolt, the Jews of Palaestina Secunda and Tiberias could have helped them reach the area. We must ask if they fled to Trachonitis because of anything more than escaping the Romans and Arabs. It has been suggested that the revolt broke out in response to Muḍir the Lakhmid's invasion of Syria Prima in March. It is possible that their flight was related to a desire to approach the enemy of their enemy, Muḍir, as might also have been their later flight to Persia.<sup>126</sup>

Josephus uses the phrase "the Iron Mountain" to describe the mountain range in Trans-Jordan running parallel to that in Cis-Jordania: "Opposite to it

<sup>122</sup> For these events see *BASIC II*.

<sup>123</sup> Although Malalas does not associate the Jews with the Samaritans in the revolt, later authors, such as Theophanes and Cedrenus, do. M. Avi-Yonah (*The Jews of Palestine* [New York, 1976], 242–43, 251, 254) argues that these later authors misinterpreted Malalas' statement that the Samaritans clashed with the Jews and the Christians, supposing that these later writers used Malalas. They could, however, have used other sources saying that Jews participated in the revolt. As they did so in the later revolts of 556 and 578, one may reason that they also did in 529. How are we to interpret Malalas' statement, since both Jews and Samaritans were oppressed by the Christian authorities? Perhaps the text is corrupt here. Avi-Yonah also points to the silence of Zacharia and Procopius on this point, but this is not decisive (cf. below, note 144).

<sup>124</sup> See the map in M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966), 172.

<sup>125</sup> See M. Sartre, *Bostra: Des origines à l'Islam* (Paris, 1985), 40.

<sup>126</sup> For all this see above, 79–80.



and flanking the Jordan lies a second range, which, beginning at Julias in the north, stretches parallel to the former chain southwards as far as Somora, which borders on Petra in Arabia; this range includes also the so-called Iron Mountain, τὸ σιδηροῦν καλούμενον ὄρος, stretching into Moab.<sup>127</sup> Undoubtedly Malalas knew the phrase from Josephus,<sup>128</sup> and used it in an archaizing way for Trachonitis. The Iron Mountain has been identified as the area lying north of the river Arnon, in the region of Zera Ma'in, east of the Dead Sea.<sup>129</sup> This identification, however, presents a problem. This region is too far from Trachonitis to be identical with it, seeing that Malalas uses "Iron Mountain" in apposition to Trachonitis: ἄλλοι δὲ εἰς τὸν Τραχῶνα εἰς τὸ λεγόμενον σιδηροῦν ὄρος.<sup>130</sup> There are two ways to resolve the difficulty. Malalas may have had in mind the entire second range referred to by Josephus, which does extend far enough north to be close to Trachonitis. He may also have meant the phrase to denote another place of refuge for the Samaritans, in addition to Trachonitis in the north, that is, the Iron Mountain in the south, which would be easier to reach from Samaria than the alternative.

Archaeological evidence can support the Iron Mountain in Moabitis, across the Jordan, as an alternative region of refuge for the Samaritans. Excavations in the Mount Nebo area, near the reputed burial place of Moses, not far from the Iron Mountain, have revealed some Samaritan inscriptions dated to the first half of the sixth century,<sup>131</sup> near the time of the revolt of 529. The text of one of them is Deut. 18:18, which forms the basis for the Messianic hope of the Samaritans,<sup>132</sup> one of the motivations of the revolt.<sup>133</sup> It is tempting to think that their Messianic ideology could have driven the Samaritans to take refuge on Mount Nebo, the traditional burial place of the reputed author of their Pentateuch, Moses himself.

### The Lakhmid-Persian Connection

Various scholars have suggested different reasons for the Samaritan revolt.<sup>134</sup> One connects the revolt with the invasion of Syria by Mundir, ruler of

<sup>127</sup> Josephus, *The Jewish War*, trans. H. Thackeray (London-New York, 1928), IV, 454.

<sup>128</sup> For Malalas' use of and references to Josephus, see *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 10, 58, 247, 248, and 260, where he calls him "the most learned Josephus."

<sup>129</sup> See F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1933), I, 384 and map XII. The Iron Mountain is in the Provincia Arabia, not in Palaestina Tertia; see *ibid.*, II, opp. 406.

<sup>130</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 447, lines 8–9.

<sup>131</sup> See S. J. Saller, *The Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo* (Jerusalem, 1941), I, 351. The editor says the date is uncertain, not taking the revolt of 529 into account.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 272, esp. M. Gaster's commentary on the Deuteronomy verse.

<sup>133</sup> See *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiu*, trans. R. H. Charles (London-Oxford, 1916), 147. On the eschatological character of the Samaritan uprising see Holum, "Caesarea and the Samaritans," 65 and note 1, quoting H. G. Kippenberg.

<sup>134</sup> Holum, "Caesarea and the Samaritans," 65–66.

Ḥīra, who was supported by Persia.<sup>135</sup> Although this is not a sufficient cause,<sup>136</sup> the two events may indeed be connected. Mundīr's invasion could have encouraged the Samaritans to rise up.

The Samaritans' desperate situation in the Byzantine world has been admirably analyzed by M. Avi-Yonah. He points out that, while the Jews had a base outside the empire in both Persia and Ḥimyar (at least before the Ethiopian victory over Yūsuf in South Arabia), the Samaritans had no such base and were completely isolated.<sup>137</sup> It is thus conceivable that they did look outside the boundaries of the empire, and Persia with its Lakhmids would have been an obvious choice. After all, the Samaritans and the Jews, though hostile to each other, lived close together and had a common enemy in Byzantium. The Samaritans may have been influenced by the Jews in trying to reach out to Persia and the Lakhmids.

Zacharia provides evidence about Samaritan feelings toward Persia in this context. He states that the Samaritans' having heard of successful Persian invasions of Roman territory emboldened them and caused them to revolt, because they had come out of Persia and been settled in Byzantine territory by the Assyrian kings.<sup>138</sup> Although Zacharia's relation of Samaritan nostalgia about where he thought they had originally come from need not be accepted, it is quite possible that they had heard about Persian invasions that motivated them to revolt. In this context we see the connection with the recent Persian-backed invasion by Mundīr in March 529, three months before the Samaritan revolt broke out in June. Contact between the Samaritans and the Lakhmids/Persians,<sup>139</sup> however, though unrecorded in the sources, may predate this event.<sup>140</sup> A breakdown in communication may have made the Samaritans aware of Mundīr's invasion two months after the fact. As noted above, the remnant of the Samaritans fled to distant Trachonitis, which may have been an attempt on their part to get closer to a group they conceived of as allies and saviors, namely, the Lakhmids/Persians.

A large number of Samaritans also fled to Persia itself, with a delegation approaching Kawad:<sup>141</sup> this establishes contact with the Persians as well as with their clients the Lakhmids. Though the number of Samaritan fugitives in Persia is uncertain, the diplomatic contact with Kawad is assured,<sup>142</sup> since it is

<sup>135</sup> Avi-Yonah, *Jews of Palestine*, 242.

<sup>136</sup> Winkler, "Die Samariter," 452.

<sup>137</sup> Avi-Yonah, *Jews of Palestine*, 242.

<sup>138</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, 69.

<sup>139</sup> Perhaps as a result of Mundīr's campaigns in 528.

<sup>140</sup> Such contacts, having been secret, would not have been mentioned in the sources.

<sup>141</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 455.

<sup>142</sup> Malalas gives 50,000. He confirms diplomatic contact between the Samaritans and the Persian Kawad, when the Byzantines captured Samaritans who had negotiated with him; *ibid.*, 456.

known that the delegation discouraged Kawad from concluding a treaty with the Byzantines toward the end of 530, a treaty he had agreed to sign the previous summer.<sup>143</sup>

#### The Silence of Two Sources

Accounts of the Samaritan revolt are given by both Procopius and Cyril of Scythopolis. Both writers belonged to the Byzantine establishment: the first a secular author who wrote his *History* from a particular point of view, the second an ecclesiastic who belonged to the orthodox Chalcedonian confession. Both would have viewed the Samaritans as a threat to law and order, especially in the Holy Land of the Christian Roman Empire. In view of the outstanding part the Arabs played in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt, one would expect these authors to say something about the Arab contribution, especially in view of the detailed nature of their accounts of the period, whether devoted to Justinianic wars or to Palestinian history of the period. Both came from the region, and their native cities suffered in the revolts of the Samaritans, Caesarea in 484 under Zeno and again in 556 when the proconsul Stephanos was killed, and Scythopolis in the events of 529 which began there. Both writers also resided in Oriens at the time, Cyril in Palestine and Procopius as Belisarius' secretary. Both the military historian and the hagiographer of Palestinian religious figures might have been expected to devote detailed attention to the 529 revolt. Yet again, in their selective manner of writing,<sup>144</sup> the Arabs are conspicuous by their absence. A general chronographer, not a military or regional writer, noticed the revolt and the Arab contribution in detail. In connection with what is known about these two authors, this may be significant.

Procopius' reason is not far to seek. His anti-Ghassānid bias is apparent, especially against Arethas, the very phylarch who distinguished himself in the Samaritan war. Once more he employs the techniques of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in the service of his *Kaiserkritik*, intending to show Justinian's folly in conferring the extraordinary *Basileia* on this man.<sup>145</sup> Cyril's silence was inspired by different motives. What needs to be looked at is the image of the Arabs in Cyril. Unlike Procopius, Cyril was concerned with doctrinal orthodoxy, and as a Chalcedonian he was not edified by the spectacle of the Monophysite Ghassānids' triumphs in this campaign. His silence is thus based on

<sup>143</sup> Stein, *HBE*, 288.

<sup>144</sup> Especially Procopius, who treats historical figures differently according to his changing moods. Sometimes the Samaritans appear as impious rogues who disturb the people of the Holy Land (*Buildings*, V.vii.5–17); at other times they appear as the victims of Justinian's imposition of a "senseless dogma" (*Anecdota*, XI.24–30).

<sup>145</sup> See below. He mentions the Samaritans' encounter only with the (Roman) *stratiotai*, thus depriving the Ghassānid federates of participation; *Anecdota*, XI.28.

his religious bias. From a reverse position we know that he could be expansive when Arab phylarchs of his own doctrinal persuasion were involved: witness his detailed treatment of the phylarchs of the Palestinian Parembolē in the fifth century and his exaggerated praise of the minor figure Terebon II around 550.<sup>146</sup> When he does mention the Ghassānid phylarch, he puts him in an unfavorable light, for example, in his treatment of the strife between two phylarchs in the 550s,<sup>147</sup> giving the impression that the region where they fought suffered greatly. One of them, however, was that very Arethas who helped quell the 529 revolt and thus contributed to peace and prosperity in the Holy Land. Cyril's Chalcedonian point of view on the Samaritan war is reflected in his account of St. Sabas' visit to Constantinople in 531, shortly after it. In spite of Empress Theodora's desire for his blessing and prayers for conceiving a child, Sabas refused to bless and pray for the Monophysite empress.<sup>148</sup> For Cyril, the Ghassānids were the wards of the wicked empress.

The silence of these two authors could possibly be construed as indirect evidence for the Ghassānids' participation in the Samaritan war. Of the two, the hagiographer's account is the more informative and valuable since it provides material for the history of Byzantine-Arab relations. While describing St. Sabas' visit to Constantinople and the requests he made of Justinian, he says that one of those requests was for help in completing the church of the Theotokos in Jerusalem, which the emperor granted.<sup>149</sup> This church had been begun by the Arab archbishop of Jerusalem, Elias, under Anastasius. He also asked for security for the monastic communities of the Desert of Juda in the Jordan Valley. Justinian agreed to have a fort for defense against the Saracens' incursions built near the monasteries founded by Sabas, and ordered Summus, the *dux* of Palestine, to carry out the project and garrison the fort.<sup>150</sup>

#### The Samaritans in the "Indian Territories"

Malalas' statement that the Ghassānid phylarch sold some of the twenty thousand Samaritan captives in the "Indian territories" is significant for the history of the region, the Red Sea area.<sup>151</sup> While Samaritans reached both the

<sup>146</sup> On the phylarchs of the Parembolē see *BAFIC*, 185–91; and on Terebon II (fl. ca. 550), *ibid.*, 190.

<sup>147</sup> On this phylarchal strife see below, 251–55.

<sup>148</sup> *Kyriillos*, 175, 177.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 175, 178.

<sup>151</sup> Geographically, the Ghassānids were better situated to sell the prisoners in the "Indian" rather than in the Persian areas, since Abū Karib was phylarch of Palestine and Arethas of the Provincia Arabia. Thus most of them must have been sold in the "Indian" parts, that is, the Red Sea area.

Arabian and African sides of the Red Sea, the present discussion will be concerned with their importance in the African littoral in Ethiopia.<sup>152</sup>

### *The Falashas*

The Jewish community in Ethiopia, called the Falashas, has been the subject of much study.<sup>153</sup> Some of the most important questions about them are: (1) their origin: are they ethnically Jews or converts from some other group and creed? (2) their name: what is the etymology, much debated, of the term "Falashas"? (3) when and in what circumstances did they appear in Ethiopia? Examining Malalas' passage on the Samaritan revolt of 529 can throw light on these vexed questions. It is beyond the scope of the present study to attempt a definitive solution to the problem of the Falashas; rather the aim is to draw the attention of scholars of Jewish and Ethiopian history to the Malalas passage and to observations drawn from it. One may argue that the peculiarities that distinguish the Falashas from the Jews are explicable by their ultimate Samaritan origin, while the distinctively Jewish traits they share with the Jews may be explained by their later conversion to Judaism and by their living in Ethiopia, which had close ties to Judaism and the Old Testament and which claimed its monarchy's descent from Solomon. One can thus propose answers to some of the above questions.

A Samaritan origin could explain the fact that "the religion of the Falashas is pure Mosaism, based upon the Ethiopic version of the Pentateuch, but modified by the fact that they are ignorant of the Hebrew language."<sup>154</sup> The curious term "Falashas" has been tentatively explained as coming from a Ge'ez root meaning "to emigrate, to wander," hence a name "Falasyan, Falasha," meaning "exiles." An alternative etymology would derive it from their country of origin, Palestine, from which they came to Ethiopia: this is a normal way of referring to foreigners emigrating into a new country. Malalas tells us that they came to Ethiopia as prisoners of war in the sixth century, sold there by the Ghassānid phylarch.

Relations between the Ghassānids and Ethiopia could explain why cap-

<sup>152</sup> India can mean in this case in Malalas either South Arabia or Ethiopia, but, as will presently be argued, the chances are that the Samaritan prisoners were mostly sold in Ethiopia. Even if they were sold in South Arabia, they could easily have found their way to Ethiopia from there; cf. P. Mayerson, "A Confusion of Indias," *JAOS* 113 (1993), 173 note 25.

The importance of the Samaritans in western Arabia will be discussed in a future publication.

<sup>153</sup> See S. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1983), 364–89, with bibliography.

<sup>154</sup> See *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* (New York, 1916), V, 327 and 328: "There are a few points of contact between Falasha, Rabbinic, Karaite, and Samaritan observances" (emphasis added). The new edition (1971), vol. VI, cols. 1143–54, does not mention the Samaritan connection.

tives taken in Palestine were sold in Ethiopia. As the Ghassānids wanted to dispose of this large number of prisoners, they decided to sell them lucratively to the Negus of Ethiopia. This Negus, Caleb, is known from the course of the Ḥimyarite-Ethiopian war in the 520s and from the letters of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām to have had close relations with the Ghassānids.<sup>155</sup> Caleb, who had assumed this biblical name (in addition to his Ethiopic throne name) in keeping with his self-image as a crusader,<sup>156</sup> had just conducted a successful campaign against the Jewish-Ḥimyarite kingdom in South Arabia, which he viewed as a crusade. We know from the *Book of the Ḥimyarites* that he brought with him Jewish captives from South Arabia.<sup>157</sup> Thus it would have been appealing to sell Samaritans from the Holy Land to a biblically-minded ruler like Negus Caleb, a convert to Christianity.

"Falashas" is a term applied to these people by the Ethiopians, not their own name for themselves. They call themselves *Bēā Esrael*.<sup>158</sup> The term "Falashas" seems to be a pejorative applied to them by hostile Christian Ethiopia, negating their self-image as the "House of Israel" and their biblical connection, especially in view of Ethiopia's strongly anti-Jewish stance owing to the recent war in South Arabia. The term may also have acquired an extra pejorative dimension, deriving from a geographical term related to Palestine or to an ethnic term related to the Philistines, enemies of the Israelites.<sup>159</sup>

The possible participation of Jews in the Samaritan revolt of 529<sup>160</sup> is also relevant, since it implies that some of the prisoners may have been Jewish. If they were sold in Ethiopia along with the Samaritans, they may have provided the beginning of Jewish influence on them in Ethiopia.

These arguments on a possible ultimate Samaritan origin of the Ethiopian Jews were first proposed to the late Professor W. F. Albright twenty-five years ago. His favorable response has provided a stimulus to restate them: "We have checked and find that PLŠT occurs in Syriac but only, as far as we can see, as the normal transcription of the rare biblical Hebrew singular *Pel-ēšet*. The country, Greek or Roman *Paestinale*, appears as the normal tran-

<sup>155</sup> The Monophysites regarded the Negus of Ethiopia as their perennial leader; on letters to Negus Caleb from Simeon of Bēth-Arshām see *Martyrs*, 63.

<sup>156</sup> On Caleb and his crusading self-image as a biblical figure see the present writer in "The *Kebra Nagast* in the Light of Recent Research," *Le Muséon* 89 (1976), 146–57, and idem, "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 53–66.

<sup>157</sup> *Book of the Ḥimyarites*, cxlii: "He brought with him many captives of the erring Ḥimyarites and fifty princes of the royal family."

<sup>158</sup> Also significant is that the Falashas consider themselves the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel in Shechem, another pointer to their Samaritan origin.

<sup>159</sup> In conformity with the practice of ecclesiastical writers giving negative biblical names to adversaries, e.g., calling Yūsuf, the Ḥimyarite king, "Pharaoh." On the pejoratives heaped on him see *Martyrs*, 260–66.

<sup>160</sup> See above, note 123.



scription in Syriac literature. This does not, however, exclude your comparison because it may well be that there was a vernacular Aramaic form of the name in Palestine derived directly from PLŠT and arabicized as *Falašat/Falašab*" (personal communication, W.F. Albright to I. Shahîd, 14 February 1966).

#### VI. THE *BASILEIA* OF ARETHAS, 529

Around the year 530 Justinian put Arethas, the Ghassānid federate, in command of as many Arab clans in Oriens as possible and conferred on him the dignity of king. This decision was a landmark in the course of Arab-Byzantine relations in the sixth century. The account of the conferment comes from Procopius. Accordingly, one must consider the historian's *Kaiserkritik* and well-known *ira et studium*, in addition to examining the questions that the account raises for Byzantine and Arab affairs.<sup>161</sup>

Nöldeke, a century ago, was the first seriously to raise the question of how Procopius' account of Arethas' *Basileia* should be understood;<sup>162</sup> a subsequent study reopened the question.<sup>163</sup> By now it is due for a thorough reexamination in the light of recent scholarship and new documentation.

Procopius' own words are the best introduction to the discussion. He prefaced his account of Arethas' *Basileia* with another on the raids of the Lakhmid Alamoundaras (Mundir) against Oriens and Byzantium's inability to deal with him:<sup>164</sup>

καὶ τὸ ξύμπαν εἰπεῖν χαλεπώτατός τε καὶ δεινότατος οὗτος ἀνήρ  
γέγονε Ῥωμαίοις πολέμιος πάντων μάλιστα. αἴτιον δὲ ἦν ὅτι Ἀλα-  
μουνδαρος μὲν βασιλέως ἀξίωμα ἔχων ἀπάντων μόνος τῶν ἐν Πέρ-  
σαις Σαρακηνῶν ἦρχε, παντί τε τῷ στρατῷ οἴός τε ἦν αἰεὶ τὴν  
ἐφοδον ποιεῖσθαι ὅπη βούλοιο τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς οὐδεὶς δὲ  
οὔτε Ῥωμαίων στρατιωτῶν ἄρχων, οὓς δοῦκας καλοῦσιν, οὔτε  
Σαρακηνῶν τῶν Ῥωμαίοις ἐνσπόνδων ἡγούμενος, οἱ φύλαρχοι  
ἐπικαλοῦνται, ξὺν τοῖς ἐπομένοις Ἀλαμουνδάρῳ ἀντιτάξασθαι  
ικανῶς εἶχεν ἐν χώρᾳ γὰρ ἐκάστη τοῖς πολεμίοις οὐκ ἀξιόμαχοι  
ἐτετάχατο. διὸ δὴ βασιλεὺς Ἰουστινιανὸς φυλαῖς ὅτι πλείσταις Ἀρ-  
έθαν τὸν Γαβαλᾶ παῖδα ἐπέστησεν, ὃς τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίοις Σαρ-  
ακηνῶν ἦρχεν, ἀξίωμα βασιλέως αὐτῷ περιθέμενος, οὐ πρότερον  
τοῦτο ἐν γε Ῥωμαίοις γεγονὸς πώποτε. Ἀλαμουνδαρος μέντοι οὐδὲν  
τι ἦσσαν, εἰ μὴ καὶ μᾶλλον, τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα ἐφθειρεν, Ἀρ-  
έθα ἐν πάσῃ ἐφόδῳ τε καὶ ἀγωνίᾳ ἢ ἀτυχοῦντος ὡς μάλιστα ἢ κα-  
ταπροδιδόντος ὡς τάχιστα. οὐ γάρ πω σαφές τι ἄμφ' αὐτῷ ἴσμεν.

<sup>161</sup> On this see below, 109–17.

<sup>162</sup> *GF*, 12–14.

<sup>163</sup> In *JAOs* 75 (1955), 211–16. For a discussion and further scholarship see below, 613–17.

<sup>164</sup> *History*, I.xvii.45–48.



ταύτη τε ξυνέβη Ἀλαμουνδάρῳ, οὐδενός οἱ ἀντιστατοῦντος, ἐπὶ μήμιστον τὴν ἐφάν ληίζεσθαι πάσαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ μακροβιώτατος ἀτεχνῶς γέγονε.

And, in a word, this man proved himself the most difficult and dangerous enemy of all to the Romans. The reason was this, that Alamoundaras, holding the position of king, ruled alone over all the Saracens in Persia, and he was always able to make his inroad with the whole army wherever he wished in the Roman domain; and neither any commander of Roman troops, whom they call "duces," nor any leader of the Saracens allied with the Romans, who are called "phylarchs," was strong enough with his men to array himself against Alamoundaras; for the troops stationed in the different districts were not a match in battle for the enemy. For this reason the Emperor Justinian put in command of as many clans as possible Arethas, the son of Gabalas, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, and bestowed upon him the dignity of king, a thing which among the Romans had never before been done. However Alamoundaras continued to injure the Romans just as much as before, if not more, since Arethas was either extremely unfortunate in every inroad and every conflict, or else he turned traitor as quickly as he could. For as yet we know nothing certain about him. In this way it came about that Alamoundaras, with no one to stand against him, plundered the whole East for an exceedingly long time, for he lived to a very advanced age.<sup>165</sup>

This important passage, our unique source, warrants detailed analysis: Διὸ δὴ βασιλεὺς Ἰουστινιανὸς φυλαῖς ὅτι πλείσταις Ἀρέθαν τὸν Γαβαλᾶ παῖδα ἐπέστησαν, ὃς τῶν ἐν Ἀραβίῳ Σαρακηνῶν ἤρχεν.<sup>166</sup> This first prefatory sentence in the account of the *Basileia* is in a sense more important than that on the *Basileia* itself, as well as being clear and less open to conflicting interpretations. What is involved in this formulation is the supreme phylarchate, the ἀρχιφυλαρχία, with which Arethas was endowed. We are thus told that, in addition to receiving the *Basileia*, Arethas was made supreme phylarch (commander-in-chief) of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens. The supreme phylarchate is given prominence in the main clause, with the conferment of the *Basileia* being expressed in a subordinate participial clause with περιθέμενος.<sup>167</sup> This answers to historical fact, since the

<sup>165</sup> Trans. H. B. Dewing (London-Cambridge, 1961).

<sup>166</sup> ". . . the Emperor Justinian put in command of as many clans as possible Arethas, the son of Gabalas, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia."

<sup>167</sup> Contrast with the reference to the βασιλέως ἀξίωμα in the sentence on Mundir the Lakhmid earlier in the passage, where it is given prominence and considered the ground for Mundir's sole rule over the Arabs of Persia.

supreme phylarchate reflects Arethas' function in the Byzantine military system of Oriens, while the *Basileia* appears more of a decorative dignity related to the barbarian world.

It is noteworthy that Procopius does not use the term ἀρχιφυλαρχία, "supreme phylarchate," which would have been a new technical term, while *phylarchos* was a well-established one. The holder of a phylarchate was territorially assigned to a province and normally held the rank of *clarissimus*. He also most probably stood in a special relationship to the *dux* of the province. To introduce the new term *archiphylarchia* might create some confusion about the structure of the military administration in Oriens, implying that the phylarchs of the various provinces, subordinate to the respective dukes, became responsible to a new supreme phylarch who technically was only the phylarch of the Provincia Arabia. The holder of this new position would have been on roughly the same level as the *magister militum* in Antioch. All this would have led to friction within the Oriens military administration, especially between the two principal representatives of the Byzantine military establishment in the diocese. Hence Procopius did not use the new technical term but employed one borrowed not from the Byzantine administrative system but from the barbarian world, βασιλεύς, which created no administrative problems, reflected Arethas' enhanced position, and was intelligible and appealing both to the Arabs he ruled (the Ghassānids) and to those over whom his rule was now extended. The new term may also not have fitted Procopius' usage as a classicizing historian.

Next for consideration is the phrase ἀξίωμα βασιλέως αὐτῷ περιθέμενος. Unlike the first phrase, this presents difficulties of interpretation, and has done so ever since Nöldeke raised doubts about how to understand "the dignity of king," ἀξίωμα βασιλέως. What is clear from the phrase is that Justinian did confer the *Basileia* on Arethas. What is controversial about this Procopian phrase derives from scholars' views on what the Byzantine *Basileia* is, and references in the literary sources to the Byzantine *imperator/autokrator* as a *basileus*.<sup>168</sup> Nöldeke<sup>169</sup> argued strongly that Arethas could not have officially assumed the title king, on the ground that the title βασιλεύς was assumed only by the Byzantine emperor. However, though the Byzantine emperor before the time of Heraclius was referred to by historians as βασιλεύς, this was not his official title: it first occurs as such in a novel of Heraclius in 629. When Nöldeke considered the application of the term *rex* to Theodoric, he did not consider it a parallel to applying βασιλεύς to Arethas. Of course a Latin term would have been used by Theodoric in the Latin-speaking West.

<sup>168</sup> On this see below, 113–17.

<sup>169</sup> See above, note 162.

Although in the Greek sources *rex* appears transliterated ῥήξ rather than translated as βασιλεύς, this was simply the usual practice of these writers. The term *rex* meant *basileus*, and not until Heraclius assumed the latter title was there a fundamental difference between *rex* and *basileus* = *imperator*.<sup>170</sup> These details bear upon the *Basileia* of Arethas, as will be seen.

It remains to consider the phrase οὐ πρότερον τοῦτο ἔν γε Ῥωμαίους γεγονὸς πάποτε.<sup>171</sup> The natural way to construe this phrase is in apposition to the preceding participial clause ἀξίωμα βασιλέως αὐτῷ περιθέμενος, interpreted as an expression of Procopius' *Kaiserkritik*,<sup>172</sup> while its content has been judged untrue or at least inaccurate.<sup>173</sup> It may also be considered in apposition to that part of the preceding passage describing Arethas' endowment with the supreme phylarchate, which would make it less of an expression of *Kaiserkritik* and more true inasmuch as no Arab federate had held such a position before Arethas. Comprehensively, it may be considered in apposition to all the preceding, that is, both the supreme phylarchate and the *Basileia*, also a less critical interpretation. It is, though, most natural to take it with the immediately preceding clause on the *Basileia*. Thus both statuses were involved in Justinian's decision. This double character of the appointment must now be considered.

#### The Supreme Phylarchate: Ἀρχιφυλαρχία

Since Procopius' statement indicates that Arethas was put in charge not of all the Arab *foederati* in Oriens but of "as many clans as possible," one must ask which clans were included and which excluded from this new supreme command, and what was the extent of his jurisdiction in Oriens, geographically speaking. With respect to the *archiphylarchia*, we know that the first and most important tribal group subsumed under this position must have been the Ghassānid *foederati* of Arabia, the *provincia* of which Arethas was phylarch. He would also have been archphylarch over other Ghassānid phylarchs and federates not in Arabia, for example, the Jafna and Nu'mān mentioned by Malalas as taking part in the expedition against Mundir in 528<sup>174</sup> and the Arab chief who fought on the Byzantine side at Callinicum.<sup>175</sup> There

<sup>170</sup> See G. Ostrogorsky, *A History of the Byzantine State*, 2nd ed., trans. J. Hussey (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), 106 note 2. For Heraclius' assumption of the title *Basileus*, see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium," 295–320, and idem, "Heraclius Πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ Βασιλεύς," *DOP* 34–35 (1982), 225–37.

<sup>171</sup> "A thing which among the Romans had never been done."

<sup>172</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 366–68.

<sup>173</sup> See the present writer in "Arethas, Son of Jabala," 212, and "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 288–96, replying to E. Chrysos, "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ in Early Byzantine International Relations," *DOP* 32 (1978), 31–75.

<sup>174</sup> See above, 70–72.

<sup>175</sup> See below, 136–39.

must have been others, such as his two sons, Jabala who fought with him against Mundir the Lakhmid in 554, and Mundir who is mentioned in connection with his journey to Constantinople in 563.<sup>176</sup> What is less certain is whether Arethas had under him non-Ghassānid *foederati* in Arabia, such as the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, who had been Byzantium's principal federates in the fourth and fifth centuries respectively. The chances are that some, perhaps many, non-Ghassānid phylarchs were also subordinated to Arethas, although their identity, tribal affiliations, and number remain obscure. This is implied in accounts of the battle of Callinicum in which Arethas appears as commander-in-chief of the *foederati* and from which some Arab chiefs took flight, the latter probably non-Ghassānids who were not happy with their recent subordination to the Ghassānid archphylarch.<sup>177</sup> The Usays inscription also tells us that in 528/29 a non-Ghassānid general was acting on orders from Arethas.<sup>178</sup>

Did Arethas have authority over non-Ghassānid and other phylarchs from provinces other than Arabia? We do have the isolated incident of friction with the phylarch al-Aswad, not related to a battle.<sup>179</sup> We may also ask whether the centralization of phylarchal power in the hands of Arethas meant that there was a κοινόν of phylarchs similar to that of non-federate Arab chiefs in Palestine.<sup>180</sup> Although our sources are scanty, we may conclude that in war conditions, with the Arab contingent serving with the army of Oriens against Persia, federate military command was centralized in the hands of the archphylarch Arethas,<sup>181</sup> although we do not know if this was the case in peacetime.

According to Procopius, this centralization was not complete, since his language implies that some phylarchs and federates were excluded. Who were they? Three groups come to mind. First, one would think that Arethas' brother and fellow Ghassānid Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, would have been subordinated to him. However, a Sabaic inscription of the South Arabian ruler Abraha clearly indicates that Abū Karib had a status

<sup>176</sup> On the battle with Mundir and his journey to Constantinople, see below, 242–44, 282–88.

<sup>177</sup> On Callinicum see below, 134–44.

<sup>178</sup> On the Usays inscription see below, 117–24.

<sup>179</sup> On him see below, 251–54.

<sup>180</sup> See *BAFIC*, 140–42. On the fifteen units into which the Ghassānid phylarchate/*Basileia* was divided after its dissolution by Maurice, see below, 542–49.

<sup>181</sup> In this connection one may compare Procopius' statement on Mundir the Lakhmid, not on the dignity of king (ἀξιωμα βασιλέως) he was endowed with, but on his function as sole commander-in-chief of the Persian Arabs: ἀπάντων μόνος τῶν ἐν Πέρσας Σαρακηνῶν ἡρχε (*History*, I.xvii.45). According to Procopius, Arethas was promoted by Justinian as a counterpoise to the power of Mundir, the sole commander of the Persian Arabs. So although non-Ghassānid federates, such as Tanūkhids and Salīhids, may not have accepted Arethas as their king, they were subordinated to him as supreme phylarch, and as such he led them into battle.

independent of Arethas,<sup>182</sup> which contradicts such an assumption. Arethas was set up by Justinian as a counterpoise to the raids of the Lakhmid Mundīr against Oriens. Although Procopius says that Mundīr's raids encompassed the whole East from Mesopotamia to Egypt, in fact the segment of the *limes* that bore the brunt of his raids was the oriental *limes* from the Euphrates to the Provincia Arabia; he ventured south into Palestine only once, at the beginning of his reign.<sup>183</sup> Thus it is likely that Abū Karib's phylarchate over Palaestina Tertia did not come under Arethas' authority. Also, the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium were supposed to guard the empire not only against Lakhmids and Persians but also against the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. Though Arethas could guard it against attackers on the Provincia Arabia, the sector in the far south facing Ḥijāz deserved special attention and a separate command, and extending Arethas' authority over that sector would have spread his effectiveness too thin. This is another reason for supposing that Abū Karib's phylarchate in Palaestina Tertia did not come under Arethas' *archiphylarchia*.

While this was the situation around 530, what it was during the rest of Justinian's reign is not clear. It seems stable until around 540, but it is unclear what happened after the death of Abū Karib, still not exactly datable. If Abū Karib predeceased his brother, Arethas could have added his realm to his own, as one may infer from campaigns in Ḥijāz against Taymā' and Khaybar,<sup>184</sup> which would have been led by Abū Karib if he were still living. This would have produced a united Ghassānid shield under one commander, Arethas, instead of the command of the two brothers. When Arethas went to Constantinople in 563, the question of his succession came up,<sup>185</sup> and we know that his sole successor, Mundīr, dominated Ghassānid affairs to the exclusion of any other commander over the southern sector.<sup>186</sup>

In addition to Abū Karib's phylarchate in the Trans-<sup>ε</sup>Araban region of Palaestina Tertia, there was also the part of Tertia this side of <sup>ε</sup>Araba, namely, Sinai, which also probably did not fall under Arethas' archiphylarchate.<sup>187</sup> Geographically it was too distant from Arabia, and militarily it would have distracted Arethas from his primary assignment, the containment of Mundīr the Lakhmid. As we know from the history of the Arabs of Sinai in the fourth and

<sup>182</sup> On the Sabaic inscription see *BASIC II*.

<sup>183</sup> For his expedition into Palestine under Anastasius, see above, 17–18.

<sup>184</sup> On these two expeditions see below, 322–31, and *BASIC II*.

<sup>185</sup> For the journey to Constantinople in 563 see below, 282–88.

<sup>186</sup> The situation after Maurice's dissolution of the centralized Ghassānid phylarchate and its later restoration is not clear. A verse by the contemporary poet Ḥassān speaks of two Ghassānids ruling simultaneously, suggesting that the Ghassānid of Palestine was independent of the one of Arabia. On the verse see *BASIC II*.

<sup>187</sup> On Abū Karib's jurisdiction, which most probably included Sinai, see below, 127–30.

fifth centuries,<sup>188</sup> *foederati* in Sinai were sometimes called upon to defend the region from raiders who would cross from the African littoral of the Red Sea, and also for the defense of Egypt. These forces would not have been included in Arethas' archphylarchate.

There were also the phylarchs of Palaestina Prima, most probably also excluded from the new arrangement. These chiefs, the phylarchs of the Parembole, had a special position within Oriens, related to the monasteries in the Desert of Juda; they were outside the main Byzantine-Persian conflict that occasioned Arethas' promotion. They were also strict Chalcedonians in an orthodox region.<sup>189</sup> These factors would have kept them outside Arethas' authority. These were not the only phylarchs in Palestine; there were also those of Kinda. Since the death of Arethas the Kindite in 528 the Kindite phylarchate over Palestine had been vacant. Around 530 the Byzantine diplomat Abraham was able to bring his successor, Qays, from Inner Arabia and have him accept a *hēgemonia* over the Palestines.<sup>190</sup> This transaction succeeded after Qays had traveled to Constantinople, where clearly Byzantium treated him with respect in endowing him not with the usual *φυλαρχία* but with the *ἡγεμονία* over more than one Palestine. Since Kinda was known as a great Arab power on both sides of the *limes*, it is unlikely that Qays the Kindite would have been asked to accept subordination to the Ghassānid Arethas.<sup>191</sup>

The phylarchs of the Trans-Euphratesian region may also have been outside Arethas' authority, as this region was too far from his primary base. However, little is definitely known about phylarchal presence in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. Late in Arethas' reign he experienced strife with a chief of Taghlib,<sup>192</sup> a powerful tribe most probably settled in the Trans-Euphratesian region, strife that could have resulted from Arethas' trying to extend his authority. It is not known if he had such authority from 530 or if it grew later.

This discussion has tried to make more specific Procopius' somewhat vague statement that Arethas was put over as many federates as possible:<sup>193</sup> the federate command would have been unified in Arethas' hands in battle conditions, even with some units fighting under their own chiefs; also, the

<sup>188</sup> For the Arabs of Sinai in the 4th century, see *BAFIC*, 297–308; for those of the 5th see *BAFIC*, 134–39.

<sup>189</sup> For the phylarchs of the Parembole, see *BAFIC*, 40–49.

<sup>190</sup> On Kinda and Qays' coming to Palestine see below, 148–60.

<sup>191</sup> Whether the situation changed after Qays' death is not clear. The strife between Arethas and Aswad in Palaestina Prima in the 550s could suggest that Arethas' authority extended there. Whether it did over the Kindites depends on whether Aswad was one; see below, 251–55.

<sup>192</sup> For the comminatory verse addressed to Arethas by 'Amr ibn-Kulthūm, the chief of Taghlib, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 21, and *BASIC* II.

<sup>193</sup> We do not know if Arethas was put in command of the federates of the Outer Shield, tribes that lived outside the *limes* but were allied with Rome, such as Kalb. It is possible, since they were the first line of defense against Mundir's raids. On the Outer Shield see *BAFIC*, 478–79.



Ghassānid supreme phylarch gained in prestige and authority as his reign went on, and so toward the end of it may have had more subordinates than at the beginning.

It remains to discuss Arethas' authority,<sup>194</sup> the dimensions of his arch-phylarchate, and its range and exercise in peace and war. First there is Procopius' passage in which Arethas is earlier described as the phylarch of the Provincia Arabia,<sup>195</sup> to which may be added his phylarchate over Palaestina Secunda. As phylarch of these two provinces, Arethas bore authority over the *foederati* in them, the base of Ghassānid power in Oriens, and over whatever minor chiefs there were. Here lay the territories associated with the Ghassānids: Gaulanitis, Bathaniyya, and Ḥawrān (Auranitis). He must also have been given authority over other Ghassānid phylarchs stationed in other provinces, such as Phoenicia and Euphratensis;<sup>196</sup> perhaps his rule also extended to non-Ghassānid phylarchs such as Tanūkhid and Salīhid, as has been suggested. All these chiefs and federates were settled in the middle sector of the *Limes orientalis*, roughly from Euphratensis to Arabia. In mobilization for war, Arethas led the entire federate contingent.

What was his authority in peacetime: did it go beyond the frontiers of his own province of Arabia? If so, did he exercise it, possibly in conflict with the *duces* of other provinces? There is no true evidence; however, there are texts, and contexts, referring to his extra-provincial activities in peacetime. First, we have the Usays inscription, which tells of one Ibn Mughīra, a general under Arethas who was sent in 529 on a mission to the Usays region in Phoenicia Libanensis, outside the Provincia Arabia.<sup>197</sup> Second, there is Procopius' account of the *Strata* dispute with Mundīr the Lakhmid, in 539, set in a region south of Palmyra, also in Phoenicia Libanensis:<sup>198</sup> Procopius specifically says that it happened in peacetime. Third, there is the al-Aswad conflict in the 540s, in Palaestina Prima;<sup>199</sup> and fourth, the final battle between Arethas and Mundīr in 554, in Chalcidicē in Syria Prima, at which Mundīr was killed.<sup>200</sup> Fifth, we have the encounter between Arethas and the tribe of Taghlib, assigned by the genealogists to al-Jazīra in Mesopotamia.<sup>201</sup> From

<sup>194</sup> As distinct from the question of sovereignty, which will be discussed in connection with his *Basileia*.

<sup>195</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47; "Arethas, Son of Jabala," 209–10.

<sup>196</sup> It has been suggested (above, 71–72) that the Ghassānid phylarchs who took part in the expedition against Mundīr in 528 were those of Phoenicia Libanensis and Euphratensis.

<sup>197</sup> For this inscription see below, 117–24.

<sup>198</sup> For the *Strata* dispute see Procopius, *History*, II.i.1–11. For *Strata* under Diocletian see Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 308.

<sup>199</sup> On this see below, 251–55.

<sup>200</sup> See below, 249–51.

<sup>201</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 21, and *BASIC* II.



these pieces of evidence one can see that Arethas asserted his authority in peacetime in practically the whole of Oriens,<sup>202</sup> strictly, however, within the federate Saracen context. He had dealings with the Lakhmid Mundir, with non-Ghassānid phylarchs, and with a tribe that belonged possibly to Mesopotamia or the Outer Shield. This, of course, was in keeping with his commission to contain Mundir, who, according to Procopius, had ravaged all of Oriens from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Mundir's raids were generally directed at the limitrophe provinces. This raises the question of the tribes of the Outer Shield, who lived *extra limitem*<sup>203</sup> but were in a special relationship to Byzantium, such as the powerful tribe of Kalb, one of whose settlements was Dūmat al-Jandal at the southern mouth of Wādī Sirhān. Such tribes may or may not have come under Arethas' archphylarchate. Also, Procopius' statement that Arethas was pitted against Mundir could help define the exact sector in which he was to carry out that assignment.

The part of the *limes* most exposed to Mundir's raids was, as stated, the sector from the Euphrates to the Red Sea; that from the Euphrates (Circesium) to Palmyra had been well fortified by Justinian. What remained was the sector from Palmyra to Ayla on the Red Sea where the two Ghassānid brothers, Arethas and Abū Karib, watched the *limes*.<sup>204</sup> This is the part of the limitrophe over which Arethas' authority was clearest, especially from Arabia to Palmyra. This section was left out of Procopius' account of Justinian's building operations, the presumption being that fortifications were unnecessary since it was in the good hands of the Ghassānids.<sup>205</sup> After Arethas' death, his son Mundir built a *praetorium extra muros* near Sergiopolis in Euphratensis,<sup>206</sup> indicating that later in the century Ghassānid authority reached north of Palmyra. This might have been happening during the latter part of Arethas' lifetime, when his prestige had grown beyond its original limits.

#### The Dignity of King: Ἀξίωμα Βασιλέως

The "dignity of king" in Procopius has been sharply differentiated from the "supreme phylarchate" (*archiphylarchia*), with which Arethas was endowed, and deserves a discussion of its own. It bears not only on an understanding of

<sup>202</sup> Apparently without friction with the Byzantine authorities such as the *duces* of the provinces or the *magister militum* in Antioch. Compare the friction between his son Mundir and the *magister militum* and future emperor Maurice, below, 453–55.

<sup>203</sup> These lived between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids, and were closer to Mundir and his raids.

<sup>204</sup> The southernmost portion of this sector, Palaestina Tertia, was, as argued above, less exposed to Mundir's raids owing to its distance; he did, however, raid it once, early in his reign (cf. above, 17–19).

<sup>205</sup> See BASIC II.

<sup>206</sup> On Mundir and Sergiopolis see below, 501–5, and BASIC II.

the Ghassānid kingship but also on the question of the title of the Byzantine *autokrator*.<sup>207</sup> It also raises questions about the *appellatio regis*, the insignia, and the problem of sovereignty.

The dignity of king was not new to the Ghassānids: they had brought it with them from the Arabian Peninsula, where its assumption by a Ghassānid ruler is attested in a Sabaic inscription.<sup>208</sup> When the Ghassānids appeared on the stage of Byzantine history, their chiefs, such as Tha'labā and Ḥārith, had already been kings to their subjects. Once the Ghassānids became *foederati*, the *Basileia* of their king most probably had to be confirmed by the Byzantine emperor, as is reported by the Arabic sources in the case of Tha'labā<sup>209</sup> around 500. Next, Jabala's *Basileia* is attested by two contemporary Syriac authors, Zacharia and Simeon of Bēth-Arshām: the latter explicitly termed him "king of the Ghassānids" around 520 when he visited him in his camp-town of Jābiya.<sup>210</sup>

The Ghassānid *Basileia* was hereditary, passing from father to son, though the king probably had to make arrangements with the Byzantine authorities regarding the succession. In Arethas' case this was not possible, his father Jabala having died suddenly at the battle of Thannūris in 528. Arethas' elevation may have been effected immediately afterward by the Ghassānids themselves, or may also have awaited consultations with Byzantium.

It is against this background that we must set Procopius' report. This new type of *Basileia* related not only to the Ghassānids but also to other federates in Oriens, and was also closely associated with the other dignity of supreme phylarch. The old *Basileia* was confirmed by the Byzantine emperor; the new one was bestowed by him, since only the emperor had the authority to impose a *Basileia* on non-Ghassānid federates in Oriens to whom he paid the *annona* and who were settled on his territory. Contemporary documents reflect the contrast between the two *Basileiai*. In Simeon, Jabala is termed "king of the Ghassānids"; in the Usays inscription, Arethas is called simply "the king," possibly indicating the extension of the *Basileia* over non-Ghassānids including the person who set up the inscription.<sup>211</sup> In this light, the *Basileia* conferred by Justinian on Arethas takes on a new meaning, one which makes Procopius' comment that this was "something that among the Romans had never been done before" less of a criticism of the emperor.<sup>212</sup>

The new *Basileia* was closely associated with the archphylarchate that had

<sup>207</sup> See below, 113–17.

<sup>208</sup> See BAFOC, 576, Sabaic inscription no. II.

<sup>209</sup> Compare the Arabic text of the 502 *foedus* with Ghassān, above, 8–9.

<sup>210</sup> For Zacharia see above, 65–66; for Simeon, see *Martyrs*, 63.

<sup>211</sup> For the Usays inscription see below, 117–24; for "king of the Ghassānids," see *Martyrs*, 63.

<sup>212</sup> See above, 98.

been created in keeping with Byzantine plans to unify federate command in Oriens. Rather than introducing a new term, ἀρχιφυλαρχία, into the administrative structure of the diocese, the new *Basileia* supplied a convenient title that reflected the new unified command.

Procopius' account, in his use of περιθέμενος, clearly expresses the fact<sup>213</sup> that Justinian conferred the title on Arethas.<sup>214</sup> Can one also speak of an *appellatio regis* and a visit to Constantinople by the honoree, for which we have no explicit evidence? It is likely that such a visit took place, though at an undetermined date;<sup>215</sup> this was the normal procedure by which Byzantine client-kings were confirmed, and the new *Basileia* of Arethas was of special importance. Earlier parallels can be adduced, such as that of Amorkesos in the fifth century, who traveled to Constantinople to be endowed with the phylarchate over Palaestina Tertia, a lesser dignity.<sup>216</sup> Arethas himself made two known visits to Constantinople for other purposes, around 540 and in 563.<sup>217</sup> By 530 both Kinda and Ghassān had lost their kings, and the Kindite successor, Qays, did go to the capital to be invested with the *hēgemonia* of the Palestines.<sup>218</sup> How could the Ghassānid successor, designated for the much greater assignment of the new *Basileia*, not have made a similar journey?

The conferment of the *Basileia* may be dated to 529, a time when the critical situation in Oriens may have prevented a trip to the capital by Arethas. If the insignia of kingship were sent to him,<sup>219</sup> he would have made the journey for the investiture ceremony at a later time, for which there is no evidence to date. What were these insignia? There is some evidence in the sources. John of Ephesus describes the journey of Arethas' son Mundir to Constantinople in 580,<sup>220</sup> and states that the crown given him was the royal crown, *tāgā*, not the *klilā* or circlet/coronet that had been worn by his Arab predecessors. We may infer then that Arethas had a royal headdress: if it was not the *tāgā*, it was the coronet or *klilā*.<sup>221</sup> Also, a pre-Islamic Arabic poet, a

<sup>213</sup> B. Rubin says, "die Verleihung des Titels steht natürlich fest," *Zeitalter Justinians*, 493 note 825, and p. 276.

<sup>214</sup> Thus the conferment of the title is not inferred from a doubtful document.

<sup>215</sup> Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 276.

<sup>216</sup> See *BAFIC*, 77–82.

<sup>217</sup> See below, 282–88, and *BASIC* I.2, 755–60.

<sup>218</sup> On Qays and Kinda see below, 153–55.

<sup>219</sup> As they used to be sent to the Mauric chiefs; see Procopius, *History*, III.xxv.3–7. A close parallel to what probably happened after Jabala's death is what Procopius says of the Lazic kings, that the Byzantine emperor would send the royal insignia to the dead king's successor; *ibid.*, II.xv.2. Perhaps the insignia were thus sent to Arethas immediately after Jabala's death.

<sup>220</sup> On this passage in John of Ephesus, see below, 398–403, 406.

<sup>221</sup> What this was in Greek is not clear; for the Greek terms used for the royal headdress of the Ethiopian Negus of this time, στέμμα and φακιόλιον, see "Kebra Nagast," 172. The crown

contemporary of Arethas, describes Arethas' crown as being made of *kharazāt*, literally "beads" or "jewels," which presumably studded the crown.<sup>222</sup> On his robes and other insignia, as parallels, we have Procopius' descriptions of other client-kings such as the Mauri and the Armenians.<sup>223</sup> Even closer is Malalas' description of the coronation of the Lazic king Tzath in Constantinople in 552.

As soon as his father Damnazes died, he immediately traveled to the emperor Justin in Byzantium, put himself at his disposal and asked to be proclaimed emperor of the Laz. He was received by the emperor, baptized, and, having become a Christian, married a Roman wife named Valeriana, the granddaughter of Nomos the patrician, and he took her back with him to his own country. He had been crowned by Justin, the emperor of the Romans, and had put on a Roman imperial crown and a white cloak of pure silk. Instead of the purple border it had the gold imperial border; in its middle was a true purple portrait medallion with a likeness of the emperor Justin. He also wore a white tunic, a *paragaudion*, with gold imperial embroideries, equally including the likeness of the emperor. The shoes that he wore he had brought from his own country, and they were studded with pearls in Persian fashion. Likewise his belt was decorated with pearls. He received many gifts from the emperor Justin, as did his wife Valeriana.<sup>224</sup>

This passage, so close in date to the *Basileia* of Arethas, could, *mutatis mutandis*, give a picture of what Arethas' investiture ceremony in the capital must have been like. Whether the promotion from "king of the Ghassānids" to "king of the Saracens in Oriens" meant the use of a different circlet or crown is not known. Unfortunately no actual client-king's regalia of the period or contemporary illustration have survived.

We may note in the Malalas passage how soon after the death of his father the Lazic king traveled to Constantinople. We may also ask whether any Ghassānid king took his wife with him to the capital, and whether the

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Tzath, the Lazic king, put on was a στεφάνιον and is called a Roman imperial crown: καὶ φορέσας στεφάνιον Ῥωμαϊκὸν βασιλικόν; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 413, lines 11–12. All these are different from the διάδημα, the royal crown of the Byzantine *autokrator*. Note that the description of Tzath uses the diminutive στεφάνιον, not στέφανος.

<sup>222</sup> On this see C. Brockelmann, ed., *Die Gedichte des Labid* (Leiden, 1891), p. 42, verse 50. The German version has simply "die Königskrone trug," while the Arabic version is more specific with *kharazāt*. For further analysis see *BASIC* II.

<sup>223</sup> Procopius, *History*, III.xxv.3–7; *Buildings*, III.i.18–28.

<sup>224</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 412–13; *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffreys and Scott, 233–

wife was called queen, at least among the Ghassānids. Hind, the Kindite wife of the Lakhmid Muḍīr, did style herself so.<sup>225</sup>

As archphylarch, Arethas had authority over various phylarchs in Oriens, as a result of his function as a federate officer in the Byzantine army, placed in command by the emperor. As king, he also had authority over his Ghassānids and also many federates of other tribal groups. Did he also have the sovereignty that normally attaches to kingship? Although he was given the title of *basileus* and the insignia of kingship, it is quite unlikely that his status as king carried with it true sovereignty. He was a king (*rex*) without a kingdom (*regnum*), that is, his *Basileia* carried with it no real territorial jurisdiction since he and his federates were settled on Roman soil. He was the king of the Ghassānids or Saracens in Oriens, not the king of Arabia or of the territory he lived on.<sup>226</sup> The regions that are associated with the Ghassānids—the Jawlān, the Bathaniyya, and Ḥawrān in Palaestina Secunda and Arabia—were Roman soil within the Diocese of Oriens, regions where they were allowed to settle by Byzantium. Even territories so close to the Arabian Peninsula as the *Strata* area south of Palmyra were Roman, not Ghassānid. This is attested by Procopius' report of the *Strata* dispute around 539.<sup>227</sup> In his dispute with Muḍīr, Arethas insists that this was Roman territory of which he appears as the defender. The only region over which he may have had territorial jurisdiction must have been *extra limitem*,<sup>228</sup> either in northern Arabia or Ḥijāz, the original homeland of the Ghassānids, whither they were later to return. Thus the region of Phoinikōn that Abū Karib presented to Justinian around 530 must have been in that category, then to become technically Roman territory (although de facto Ghassānid).

Arethas was thus not an independent sovereign. He did, however, belong to the company of the "family of kings" in late antiquity, and, as a Christian ruler, he had entered the spiritual orbit of the Christian "family of kings" of whom the Byzantine *autokrator* was the supreme head.<sup>229</sup>

<sup>225</sup> In an inscription, for which see Rothstein, *DLH*, 24.

<sup>226</sup> Ibn al-Athīr noted that the Ghassānids had no territorial sovereignty or jurisdiction; see his *Kāmil* (Beirut, 1965), I, 510. Compare the rulers of the Germanic *regna* in the Roman West, notwithstanding the differences between them and Arabs in the East: e.g., the king of the Goths was *rex Gotthorum*, not *rex Aquitaniae*. Thus Arethas belonged to the category of autonomous, if not independent and sovereign, kings who lived within the Byzantine frontier on Roman territory. On the four categories of kings and rulers with whom Byzantium had to deal, see Chrysos, "Title," 33.

<sup>227</sup> On the *Strata* dispute, see below, 209–218.

<sup>228</sup> Reference to Ghassānid territory begins to appear later in the century; see below, 313–14, and BASIC I.2, 763–65, 803.

<sup>229</sup> On the concept of the "family of kings," see G. Ostrogorsky, "Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 8 (1936), 41–61; F. Dölger, "Die 'Familie der Könige' im Mittelalter," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 60 (1940), 397–420; A. Grabar, "God and the

The occasion and background of this extraordinary *Basileia*, including its precise date, may now be considered. Procopius, our only source, gives little in the way of background, placing its conferment in a causal sequence occasioned by the raids of Mundir against Oriens. As the immediate occasion, this does carry some weight and is supported by what is known about Mundir's power in the Fertile Crescent and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>230</sup> Another part of the background is the political and military situation in Oriens around 528, which must have caused the conferment of the *Basileia* to take on a new urgency. That year saw the sudden deaths of the two principal Arab federates, Arethas the Kindite and Jabala the Ghassānid, thus leaving federate power in Oriens in disarray at a time of war with Persia. It was this combination of internal disarray in Oriens and external attack by Mundir that provided the necessary background for the creation of the extraordinary *Basileia*.

The most eligible phylarch in Byzantium's service at the time was Jabala's son Arethas, who succeeded his father as phylarch of the most important Ghassānid province, Arabia. His distinguished role in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt helped make the choice of him certain. Of the two groups, Ghassān was more active in Byzantium's service than Kinda, and the choice of the Ghassānid heir prevailed over the Kindite. It is also possible that the veteran diplomat Abraham, father of Nonnosus, could have inspired the appointment. While Procopius on the one hand cites Mundir's *Basileia* and unified command over the Persian Arabs as the model for Arethas' promotion, Abraham, in his firsthand negotiations with Mundir at the Ramla conference,<sup>231</sup> must have formed an opinion on how to counteract Mundir's power and impressed it on the Byzantine authorities.

As to the date of the *Basileia*: in Procopius it comes between Mundir's speech to the Persian king and the account of the battle of Callinicum in 531. The actual *Basileia*, however, must predate 531, and postdate Arethas' succeeding Jabala in 528. There is now the evidence of the Usays inscription, dated to 423 of the Era of Bostra = A.D. 528/29,<sup>232</sup> in which Arethas appears as king and commander-in-chief. The Syriac documents for the close of his reign do not mention him after 570,<sup>233</sup> thus inclining one to date his death to 569, giving him a reign of just forty years. This figure agrees with that of the pre-Islamic poet Labid, who speaks of his reign as having lasted forty years.<sup>234</sup>

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'Family of Princes' Presided over by the Byzantine Emperor," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954), 117-23, correcting Ostrogorsky and Dölger. The Ghassānid king moved more in the spiritual order of the "family of kings" as understood by Grabar.

<sup>230</sup> For this see *BASIC* II.

<sup>231</sup> On Abraham and the conference of Ramla, see above, 40-42.

<sup>232</sup> For the Usays inscription see below, 117-24.

<sup>233</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 23.

<sup>234</sup> In the same verse that gives evidence for Arethas' crown; cf. above, note 222.



His endowment with the *Basileia* should then probably be dated to the second half of 529, after the Samaritan revolt had been put down.

#### VII. THE TWO *BASILEIAI*: GHASSĀNID AND BYZANTINE

The passage in Procopius on the *Basileia* of Arethas has aroused considerable interest. But all that has been written on the subject has been dwarfed by E. Chrysos' monumental article which, although it dealt with the *Basileia* of the Byzantine *autokrator*, did treat with much detail that of Arethas and other rulers who moved in the Byzantine orbit.<sup>235</sup> The present writer had dealt in separate articles with the two *Basileiai*, that of the Byzantine *autokrator*, Heraclius, and that of the Ghassānid king, Arethas.<sup>236</sup> Chrysos' article has united the discussion of the two and elicited from the present writer a tentative response<sup>237</sup> in 1981. The more intensive analysis of the passage in Procopius and of Ghassānid history in the sixth century, undertaken in this volume, calls for a return to the exchange concerning the *Basileia* in view of the importance of the passage not only for Ghassānid history and Arab-Byzantine relations but also for Byzantine constitutional history.

#### The Ghassānid ἄξιωμα βασιλέως

It has been argued above<sup>238</sup> that the title *basileus* was conferred on Arethas, that there was an *appellatio regis*, that there was a journey to Constantinople for the investiture, and that Arethas had the *regalia* of kingship, of which the royal headdress (cirlet or coronet) is mentioned in the sources, most of which Chrysos has denied.<sup>239</sup> It has also been argued that Arethas had no territorial sovereignty within the *limes* and that, if he had any it was *extra limitem* in northern Arabia or Ḥijāz. Within the *limes* he was a *rex* without a *regnum*. There is no need to repeat these arguments here. It is more fruitful to go through the points that Chrysos raised in his discussion<sup>240</sup> of the Ghassānid *Basileia* of Arethas in which the Lakhmid profile is prominent.

<sup>235</sup> See Chrysos, "Title." The part that deals specifically with the Ghassānid *Basileia* may be found on pp. 46–52. His article has an extensive bibliography on the *Basileia*, both Byzantine and Ghassānid.

<sup>236</sup> For the Byzantine *Basileia* see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium" and "Heraclius Πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς." As for the Ghassānid *Basileia*, I have dealt with it in various articles that are cited in Chrysos, "Title," although they were not specifically on the *Basileia*.

<sup>237</sup> See "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 288–96 (hereafter "Titulature").

<sup>238</sup> See above, 103–8.

<sup>239</sup> He does concede, however, that he had a royal headdress, the cirlet; "Title," 50.

<sup>240</sup> The discussion in this chapter will be limited to the *Basileia* of Arethas; for that of his son Mundir, also discussed in "Title" (pp. 50–51), see below, 398–406; for the title "King of Kings" applied to the Arab ruler of Palmyra, commented upon by Chrysos in "Title," 51–52, see "Titulature," 291–92; on the assumption of the title *basileus* by the Ghassānid phylarchs after the restoration of their phylarchate or kingship, see *ibid.*, 291, and below, 123–24.



1. Chrysos draws a distinction between βασιλεύς and ἀξίωμα βασιλέως and enlists this alleged distinction in favor of his view that Arethas did not have the title "king." But there is no real distinction between the two, as already noted by B. Rubin who drew attention to the identity of the phrase ἀξίωμα βασιλέως with that applied to the Lakhmid Mundīr about whose title to kingship there is no doubt.<sup>241</sup> The phrase is not a *hapax legomenon* applied only to Arethas but also to other kings;<sup>242</sup> furthermore, it is also clear that in the sentence wherein occurs the phrase applied to Arethas, Procopius had already used the term βασιλεύς and applied it to Justinian, who is described as having conferred the *Basileia* on Arethas, and so the historian did not wish to use the term βασιλεύς twice for obvious reasons, stylistic and other. Thus the phrase came in handy.

2. He conceives of the *foederati* as nomads, a myth that has taken a long time to die.<sup>243</sup> Some of them may have been such in the Peninsular stage of their wanderings, but the Ghassānids were sedentary; they had been a sedentary group in their original homeland in South Arabia before they wandered to the north and finally became the principal *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens in the sixth century, where they contributed much to the urbanization of the region<sup>244</sup> and where they led a mobile life virtually as part of the *exercitus comitatensis* in Oriens, which should not be confused or equated with a nomadic way of life. It is easy to argue, as Chrysos did, from the erroneous premise of a nomadic life for the Ghassānids to the conclusion that their ruler was a tribal shaykh and not a Byzantine βασιλεύς.

3. He refers to Procopius' reflection on the Ghassānid *Basileia* that this "was a thing that had not happened before among the Romans" (οὐ πρότερον τοῦτο ἔν γε Ῥωμαίους γεγονός ἰώποτε).<sup>245</sup> The place of this statement in Procopius is not crystal clear in Chrysos' argument, but it does contribute to the drift of his argument as it confirms his stand on the *Basileia* of Arethas: that the statement in Procopius is true and the Romans had never conferred the *Basileia* on an Arab king,<sup>246</sup> including Arethas.

This sentence has been analyzed in detail.<sup>247</sup> It is either a false statement, a reflection of Procopius' expression of his *Kaiserkritik*,<sup>248</sup> or a true statement.

<sup>241</sup> See "Title," 48, 46.

<sup>242</sup> It is applied by Procopius to Empress Theodora herself (*Anecdota*, IX.54) and by Cyril of Scythopolis to the Lakhmid Mundīr; see above, 17–19.

<sup>243</sup> "Title," 46.

<sup>244</sup> On Ghassānid structures, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>245</sup> See "Title," 47–48.

<sup>246</sup> That this is the drift of his argument is confirmed by what he says on Odenathus, *ibid.*, 51–52.

<sup>247</sup> See above, 98.

<sup>248</sup> It is noteworthy that the phrase recurs in more or less the same form elsewhere in his

In the latter case it most likely refers *only* to the archphylarchate or the unusual *Basileia*, conferred on Arethas and which made him king over federates that did not belong to his Ghassānids.

4. Prominent in his discussion of the *Basileia* of Arethas is the Lakhmid profile. The starting point is the statement in Procopius that the ἀξίωμα βασιλέως of Arethas was a Byzantine reaction to the ἀξίωμα βασιλέως of the Lakhmid Mundir. This leads him to an exploration of the Lakhmid *Basileia* which takes up most of the discussion of that of Arethas. The drift of this turn in his argument is not entirely clear, and its function in his discussion is not explicitly stated. But it can be safely inferred that he wishes to present the *Basileia* of Arethas as an echo of the Lakhmid and the Sasanid tradition, that is, not a Byzantine *Basileia*. This conclusion cannot be accepted. Byzantium may have wanted to imitate Sasanid Persia in uniting as many federates as possible under Arethas, but it did not need to be inspired by Persia in the matter of the *Basileia*, the conferring of which on client-kings was so well established in Byzantium, going back to the days of the pagan Roman Empire. In the case of the Ghassānids, it was a confirmation and an extension of a royal tradition that the Ghassānids had had and which they had brought with them from South Arabia. Chrysos' detailed discussion, however, deserves an examination, and the following observations are presented in response.

a. Chrysos does not do justice to the *Kaiserkritik* expressed and implied in the passage in Procopius.<sup>249</sup> The whole long passage on Mundir and Arethas is redolent of it.<sup>250</sup> The emphasis in Procopius on the *Basileia* of Arethas as an echo of the Lakhmid is one element in this *Kaiserkritik* which has inclined Chrysos to take it at its face value and develop the thrust of his argument on the *Basileia* of Arethas along the lines of this echo. The more important element in the Lakhmid echo was the creation of the archphylarchate, which was covered under the umbrella of the *Basileia*. This is where the effect of the Lakhmid echo ends, and this is the extent of the Lakhmid<sup>251</sup> implication in the passage in Procopius.

b. It follows from the preceding paragraphs that the investigation of the

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work, especially when he is indulging in *Kaiserkritik* as in *Anecdota*, VI.11, or even in *Kaiserinkritik* as in *ibid.*, XXX.24.

<sup>249</sup> E.g., compare Chrysos' belief that the *prodosia* charge leveled by Procopius against Arethas was true; see "Title," 48 note 119 where he speaks of "the notorious treachery of Arethas." On this see below, 220–26.

<sup>250</sup> *History*, I.xvii.40–48.

<sup>251</sup> In connection with the Lakhmid echo, it might be added that the art of Procopius succeeded in this crucial passage in conveying the impression that the military assignment of Arethas was to contain Mundir. This was only one of his assignments. His equally and perhaps more important appointment was to participate in the campaigns of the army of Oriens against the Persian imperial army and not only against that of the Persian client-king, Mundir.

“constitutional” position of the Lakhmid ruler in relation to the Persian king is irrelevant.<sup>252</sup> In his treatment of the *Basileia* of the Lakhmid Mundir, Chrysos relies on Greek sources that sometimes call him φύλαρχος (“phylarch”) or βασιλίσκος (“kinglet”) when his overlord the “king of kings” is mentioned.<sup>253</sup> But this was only natural in order to reflect the inferior position of Mundir vis-à-vis the king of kings; it does not, however, justify Chrysos’ conclusion in rejecting on this basis the title of king for Arethas and the *appellatio regis*, which he in fact does<sup>254</sup> because he erroneously equated the *Basileia* of Arethas with that of Mundir.

c. He joins issue with B. Rubin on the *appellatio regis* and asserts that Arethas was put in charge of as many federate tribes<sup>255</sup> as possible but had no territorial jurisdiction within Oriens. As has been maintained above, the statement is true, since Arethas was a king without a kingdom, a *rex* without a *regnum*; Chrysos, however, denies him both and argues that he was not a *basileus* because he had no territorial *Basileia*. The truth is that he was both a *basileus* and had the *Basileia* but it was not territorial. Whatever territorial sovereignty Arethas had was *extra limitem*.<sup>256</sup>

d. Chrysos expresses his position in the form of a preposterous disjunction: either Arethas was given the title king but was not a real king, or he was only given the *insignia* of kingship “as the real counterpart of King Moundhir.”<sup>257</sup> He rejects the first possibility on the ground that the *Basileia* is not mentioned in Novel 102 on Arabia which goes back to 536. But within the provincial framework to which the novel is related, Arethas was a phylarch, an officer in the Byzantine army. There is no place in such a document for referring to him as king. The title *basileus* conferred on him by Justinian had other contexts within which it could be used and was used.<sup>258</sup> The other possibility, that he was invested with the *insignia*<sup>259</sup> but did not have the title *basileus*,

<sup>252</sup> “Thus, if we want to understand the royal dignity of Arethas, as Procopius wants us to, we have to see the ‘constitutional’ position of the Lakhmid phylarch, on the other side of the *limes*, in his relation to the Persian Great King”: “Title,” 48.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. It is noteworthy that Procopius’ art is employed in the description of Arethas’ jurisdiction over the federates. Instead of saying that Justinian put him in command of as many federates as possible in Oriens, using the correct and technical term, σύμμαχοι, he uses the term “tribes,” φυλαί, which assigns Arethas to the world of the nomads. Perhaps this, too, misled Chrysos into denying that the chief of such a group of nomads could have been a Byzantine *basileus*. He repeats on p. 49 the epithet he employed for the Ghassānids previously on p. 46, namely, “nomadic.”

<sup>256</sup> Thus, that he was at least partially a *rex* with a *regnum*, but *extra limitem*, also militates against Chrysos’ view that he was entirely without territorial jurisdiction as king.

<sup>257</sup> Chrysos, “Title,” 49.

<sup>258</sup> See above, 103–9.

<sup>259</sup> He concedes to him as a royal headdress the circlet, not the crown; “Title,” 50.

must also be rejected. Chrysos is still in the embrace of the Lakhmid theory of Procopius and suggests the utterly incomprehensible view that Arethas had been given the *insignia* of kingship but without the title—and this in spite of the explicit statement of Procopius that Justinian gave that title to him.<sup>260</sup>

e. Chrysos continues to argue along the lines of the Lakhmid theory for an explanation of the *Basileia* of the Ghassānid Arethas and applies it to that of his son and successor, Mundir.<sup>261</sup> He discusses the well-known passage in John of Ephesus on the crown of Mundir given him by Emperor Tiberius. As is clear from the passage, Arethas wore the royal “cirlet,” while his son was given by Tiberius the royal “crown.” Now this does not strip Arethas of the *Basileia*, just as the fact that he had no territorial jurisdiction in Oriens is not sufficient ground for stripping him of the title king.

#### Byzantine αὐτοκράτορες and Federate βασιλεῖς

Now that it has been established that the Ghassānid Arethas had the title βασιλεύς conferred on him by Justinian, it remains to examine the problem of that title as applied to the Byzantine emperor, examined by Chrysos extensively in his article. The discussion here will be limited to the relationship of the two titles as they relate to the Byzantine emperor and the Arab client-king.

#### A

The first question that arises is that of usage. Nöldeke was the first to raise this question and note that in spite of the passage in Procopius, explicitly speaking of the conferment of the *Basileia* on Arethas, the Greek documents uniformly refer to him not by the title βασιλεύς but by others, especially phylarch. He was the first to assemble the relevant documents,<sup>262</sup> and Chrysos relied on him in drawing his conclusions.<sup>263</sup> Nöldeke's views have been carefully examined by the present writer, and the inappropriateness of invoking the authority of an Orientalist who wrote a century ago on a strictly Byzantine problem, such as the titulature of the Byzantine ruler, has also been commented upon.<sup>264</sup> Only a few additional comments are necessary in this context.

1. As has been pointed out above, the title king related Arethas to his

<sup>260</sup> Chrysos goes the length of suggesting that the ἄξιωμα βασιλέως, the object of the participle περιθέμενος, should be understood to mean “royal honors and *insignia*,” that is, not title of kingship! See “Title,” 49.

<sup>261</sup> See “Title,” 50–51. The discussion of the *Basileia* of the Ghassānid Mundir will be discussed further, together with Chrysos' views on it; see below, 398–406.

<sup>262</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 12–14.

<sup>263</sup> See “Title,” 47.

<sup>264</sup> See “Titulature,” 293–94, and *BAFOC*, 520–21; even though the Orientalist was Nöldeke.

non-Rhomaic subjects, Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, as a non-Rhomaioi and as a federate king. This is the world of the "barbarians" for whom the title king was conferred and in which it was very meaningful.<sup>265</sup> The documents assembled by Nöldeke are *Byzantine* official documents, secular and ecclesiastical; hence they refer to him correctly and accurately by his strictly Byzantine title, which allied him to the world of Byzantium where he was an officer in the Byzantine federate army with a clearly defined function that carried with it the title "phylarch,"<sup>266</sup> his most important function. This is natural and to be expected and should provide no cause for doubt that he had the title king, nor surprise that the title was not applied to him at all, in documents<sup>267</sup> other than those of the official Byzantine *imperium* and *ecclesia*. In fact, this other world—the non-Rhomaic world—did apply the title to him both in literary contexts and in strictly formal ones, as when one of his generals records the assignment laid upon him by Arethas in the Usays inscription.<sup>268</sup>

2. That Greek writers do not apply the title βασιλεύς to Arethas is due to the simple fact that the title was normally, but unofficially, applied to the Byzantine emperor himself, whose strict official title, however, was not βασιλεύς but αὐτοκράτωρ. The world of the eastern Mediterranean had since Hellenistic times referred to its rulers as βασιλεῖς, a usage hallowed by centuries. Hence the inappropriateness of applying the same title to the client of the Byzantine emperor. This would have been the case especially in a document that involved mentioning both rulers, where the title βασιλεύς would have been avoided as a title for the client-king, Arethas. In a strictly official document, addressed by the Byzantine emperor to the client-king, the emperor would have used αὐτοκράτωρ for himself if he addressed the client Ghassānid as βασιλεύς; but he would have used βασιλεύς for himself if he addressed the Ghassānid as φύλαρχος. Unfortunately no such document involving the two has survived,<sup>269</sup> indeed, very few Greek documents have sur-

<sup>265</sup> Whereas the term "phylarch" would have meant much less to the Arabs since in translation it would have been *sayyid* or *shaykh* in spite of the fact that it was in this period a technical term, expressing the federate status of the Arab chief.

<sup>266</sup> Even the title *archibylarchos*, which in fact Arethas functionally became, was avoided.

<sup>267</sup> It is strange that Nöldeke should have animadverted on the use by Syriac authors of the term *malik*, king (Syriac *malkā*), as applied to Arethas, which he did not consider significant (*GF*, 13). Surely John of Ephesus, whom he cites, knew what he was saying when he applied the title "king" (*malkā*) to Arethas. To John of Ephesus is owed the detailed passage that describes the grant of a royal crown to Arethas' son Mundir and the further statement that before him the Arab chiefs and kings had only the cirlet as a royal headdress. This applied to Arethas, and so John of Ephesus wrote on the kingship of Arethas knowingly, even of his royal headdress. Nöldeke was so wide of the mark here that he termed his monograph "*Die Ghassānischen Fürsten . . .*" instead of "*Die Ghassānischen Könige . . .*"

<sup>268</sup> For the Usays inscription, see below, 117–24.

<sup>269</sup> Traces of such a document are discernible in Malalas' account of the punitive expedition against the Lakhmid Mundir, for which, see above, 70–76; but at that time Arethas was not yet king.

vived in which the Ghassānid king is mentioned, another reason for not drawing definite conclusions on whether or not he was ever referred to as king in such documents.

Another reason for the avoidance of the term βασιλεύς as a description of the Ghassānid kings even among the Arabs in certain contexts is the fact that the Arabs themselves were used to referring to the Byzantine emperor as *al-malik*.<sup>270</sup> The Ghassānid ruler himself, who was king, was thus perhaps reluctant to use this title when his overlord, the Byzantine emperor, was also involved in the same context. In such a context the kingship of the Ghassānid federate would appear Lilliputian compared to that of the emperor, and so much so that the Ghassānid would refer to himself as "servant of the *basileus*, the *malik*."<sup>271</sup> Calling himself βασιλεύς when referring to his overlord, the Byzantine emperor, would have embarrassed the Ghassānid federate and annoyed the emperor. This could easily be inferred from the anger of Justinian when he received a letter from Gelimer that began Γέλιμερ Ἰουστινιανῷ βασιλεῖ,<sup>272</sup> as the letter implied that Gelimer and Justinian were equal rulers as kings. Justinian took offense not only because Gelimer usurped the title and called himself king, but because he treated him as his equal.

In spite of the power of tradition in referring to the Byzantine ruler as βασιλεύς, his official and correct title remained *imperator*, αὐτοκράτωρ. Not only in official Byzantine documents is he described as such, but also in non-official documents where an author writes responsibly as a Roman and not carelessly, following the Hellenistic usage of calling the ruler βασιλεύς. In such a mood was Procopius when writing of the Byzantine ruler, especially when the king of Persia was also mentioned in the same sentence. For the Byzantine emperor he uses αὐτοκράτωρ, and for the king of Persia he uses βασιλεύς.<sup>273</sup> So does the Persian king, anxious and careful to distinguish his title from that of the Byzantine emperor. In an official document he refers to himself as "king of kings," while the Byzantine emperor Justinian is "caesar."<sup>274</sup> He, of course, wants to avoid referring to Justinian as king since he had

<sup>270</sup> Reflecting Greek usage when it simply uses the term with the definite article: ὁ βασιλεύς. The Arabs also referred to him as *Ḳayṣar* (Caesar); see the present writer in *EI*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Ḳayṣar*.

<sup>271</sup> This context involves none other than Arethas' own son, Mundir, who was given the royal crown by Tiberius, described in the well-known passage in John of Ephesus. Now there is no question about Mundir's *Basileia*, commented upon in a clear and long passage by the Syriac ecclesiastical writer. And yet the Greek inscriptions of Mundir that have survived do not mention his kingship, which is in consonance with what has been said earlier in this section on why βασιλεύς does not appear in the Greek inscriptions of his father, Arethas, and thus its absence is certainly no evidence or proof that he was not a king.

<sup>272</sup> *History*, III.ix.20. He would have been less angry if Gelimer addressed him as αὐτοκράτωρ.

<sup>273</sup> *History*, VIII.xi.24.

<sup>274</sup> See *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and trans. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool, 1985), p. 62, lines 180, 182–83.



already referred to himself as "king of kings." But no one experienced more difficulty in describing the rulers of the Near East in the sixth century than Abraha, the ruler of South Arabia, who crowded six of them into one inscription, including both the Persian king and the Byzantine *autokrator*.<sup>275</sup>

## B

The facts of Byzantine and Sasanid history show that neither the Byzantine *autokrator* nor the Persian king of kings had any difficulty conferring the title king on the rulers who moved in their respective orbits. In fact throughout this proto-Byzantine period the *autokrator* was very active as a veritable king-maker. And the history of the Ghassānids and their *Basileia* from Anastasius until Heraclius is most enlightening on this point. Especially important is the precious passage in Procopius on the conferment of the *Basileia* on Arethas by Justinian.

It is also far from true that Byzantium abolished all the client-kingdoms in the last quarter of the sixth century and that it was only then that the title *basileus* could be assumed by the Byzantine *autokrator*.<sup>276</sup> This is certainly not true of the Ghassānids. The journey of the Ghassānid Muḍir to Constantinople and his "coronation" by Tiberius took place during that period, and the subsequent collapse of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations was a matter entirely unrelated to what has been presumed as the desire of Byzantium to abolish its federate *Basileia*.<sup>277</sup> The history of the Ghassānids from the reign of Maurice to that of Heraclius presents the Ghassānid *Basileia* as restored, and this restoration is reflected clearly in the contemporary Arabic sources.<sup>278</sup> Furthermore, this overlapped with a period in which the Lakhmids were in eclipse after the death of al-Nu'mān who fell out with Chosroes Parviz.<sup>279</sup> This concurrence of Ghassānid royal restoration and Lakhmid royal eclipse militates against the Lakhmid or Sasanid theory which views the Byzantine conferment of the various Byzantine *Basileiai* on the client-kings as an echo of the Sasanid practice.<sup>280</sup>

The detailed examination of the *Basileia* of the Ghassānid federate king undertaken in this volume has confirmed the position taken by the present writer in an earlier study—that the Byzantine ruler continued to be officially and technically not *basileus* but *autokrator* in the proto-Byzantine period and it was only in the reign of Heraclius that the dramatic change in the imperial

<sup>275</sup> On Abraha's Dam inscription, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>276</sup> See Chrysos, "Title," 69–70.

<sup>277</sup> On this, see below, 540–49.

<sup>278</sup> See below, 622–32.

<sup>279</sup> The fall of Nu'mān the Lakhmid took place in the first decade of the 7th century; for the reign of Nu'mān, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 107–20.

<sup>280</sup> As conceived in Chrysos, "Title."



titulature to *πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεύς* took place.<sup>281</sup> It was argued there that, in spite of the Hellenistic substrate of the term, it was Christianity that gave the Hellenistic term its fuller content and that what emerged from the titular change was a new concept of *Basileia*—the biblical and Christian one. Furthermore, it was argued that the immediate occasion of the assumption of the new title in 629 was the return of the victorious crusader-emperor Heraclius to Constantinople after his resounding victory at Nineveh and a long campaign that was conceived as a *μυστικὴ θεωρία*.<sup>282</sup> The earlier study considered this as the *immediate* background against which the assumption of the new title in the famous novel was set. But Heraclius' pilgrimage to Jerusalem must also be taken into account and is in fact the more relevant immediate background, in spite of the difficulty of assigning it a precise date. The crucial relevance of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem derives from the fact that it brought him to the city of David, the biblical king par excellence. Heraclius' self-image as the David of his age is reflected in such gestures as calling one of his sons David and in his issue of the silver David Plates;<sup>283</sup> the pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to restore the Holy Cross presented another point of similarity—David's transference of the Ark from Hebron to Jerusalem. On such a memorable occasion and in the midst of such a euphoric Christian mood, the assumption of the title with which David was associated, the *Basileia*, would have been natural on the part of the new David of the seventh century, and would have represented the completion of the process of identification with the biblical king.<sup>284</sup>

### VIII. THE USAYS INSCRIPTION

The Usays inscription is the most important Arabic historical inscription of the sixth century, the second most important of all pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions as a historical document.<sup>285</sup> It was discovered in 1962/63 in Jabal Usays, a hundred kilometers southeast of Damascus.<sup>286</sup> After being the subject of a

<sup>281</sup> As argued in "The Iranian Factor," note 2.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 308 note 56.

<sup>283</sup> On the David Plates, see Suzanne S. Alexander, in "Titulature," 289 note 3; also J. Trilling, "Myth and Metaphor at the Byzantine Court," *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 249–63.

<sup>284</sup> The precise date of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem is disputed. But this is a mere matter of detail; Heraclius assumed the title either in anticipation of the journey to Jerusalem or after its completion. On the date of the pilgrimage, see C. Mango, who favors A.D. 630, in "Deux études sur Byzance et la Perse sassanide," *TM* 9 (1985), 91–118; the section on the pilgrimage may be found on pp. 105–18. And so does Bernard Flusin in the most recent discussion of the date in *Saint Anastase le Perse* (Paris, 1992), 293–309.

<sup>285</sup> After the Namāra inscription of A.D. 328.

<sup>286</sup> See K. Brisch, "Das osayyadische Schloss in Usais," *MDAIK* 19 (1963), 141–87, and 20 (1965), 138–77.

preliminary study in 1964,<sup>287</sup> the inscription was restudied with many improvements in 1971; the later treatment corrected the earlier dating and re-read one of the crucial words as being made up of not five letters but six, read *msylḥt*.<sup>288</sup>

The inscription speaks of the dispatch of a commander named Ibn Mughīra al-Awsī by the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith (Arethas) on a military mission in the year 423 of the Era of Bostra: *Ibrāhīm ibn Mughīra al-Awsī arsalanī al-Ḥārith al-malik ʿalā Sulaymān msylḥt/h sanat 423*. This illuminates three areas of Ghassānid history in this period: (a) the identity of the commanding officer, Ibn Mughīra; (b) the reference to Arethas as king; and (c) the object of the military assignment laid upon Ibn Mughīra. Palaeographical problems attend most especially the third and last of these points; hence the present treatment will consider them in reverse order.

#### A

It is best to begin with A. Grohmann's treatment of the three words transliterated as *ʿalā Sulaymān msylḥt/h*, which he translated "gegen Sulaiman

<sup>287</sup> See M. al-ʿUshsh, "Kitābat ʿArabiyya," *al-Abḥāth* (American University of Beirut), 17 (1964), 227–316. The inscription is discussed on pp. 302–3. Although A. Grohmann considerably refined on the reading of the text, the discussion by Dr. al-ʿUshsh of the many other Arabic inscriptions of Islamic Umayyad times is very valuable, and the publication of these epigraphic texts in facsimile sheds light on the palaeography of the Usays inscription examined in this section. He recognized the great historical importance of the inscription and left it to Semiticists to reflect on its linguistic *cruces*.

<sup>288</sup> A. Grohmann, *Arabische Paläographie* (Vienna, 1971), II, 15–17. Grohmann corrected the computation of the Era of Bostra year 423 to A.D. 528, and read the crucial word *mllḥ* as *msylḥt/h* (p. 15 notes 2, 3). Discerning the letter *yā* in the fourth downward-curved stroke in the word rules out the reading by al-ʿUshsh of *mllḥh* with a *tashdīd* on the *lām*. See the facsimile above, from Grohmann, p. 16.

als (Grenz)-wache."<sup>289</sup> Grohmann was thinking of the 528 expedition against Mundir the Lakhmid.<sup>290</sup> In that context Ibn Mughira was dispatched as a guard against someone named Sulaymān, who belonged to Mundir's camp. However, this interpretation must be rejected on historical and philological grounds.

a. Since Grohmann, oddly enough, was depending on a 1927 source for his information on Ghassān,<sup>291</sup> he understood the historical setting as being that of Arethas the Ghassānid's victory over Mundir the Lakhmid in 528, as a result of which he was named to the dignities of chief phylarch, king, and *patricius*. However, the choice of the 528 campaign is arbitrary, and it is not causally related to the dispatch of Ibn Mughira: the events around 528 were more complicated than this simplification.<sup>292</sup> Again, who is "Sulaymān," interpreted by Grohmann as a Lakhmid officer against whom Ibn Mughira was sent to guard the frontier after the anti-Mundir expedition?<sup>293</sup> Our sources attest no Sulaymān in the Lakhmid or pro-Lakhmid onomasticon for this period.<sup>294</sup> In Grohmann's reading, the proper name is isolated from the following word, making the person appear quite unusually without a patronymic or other qualification, unlike the officer whose full name, Ibrāhīm ibn-Mughira, is given, or Arethas, who is qualified as "the king." No Sulaymān is attested who was well enough known to appear thus without patronymic or epithet.

b. The palaeographical *crux* is the last word before the dating clause, *msylhṭ/h*. How is this to be vocalized and provided with diacritics, being only a consonantal skeleton? Grohmann read *mstlḥṭ*,<sup>295</sup> which may be vocalized *mustalahat*. From his translation "(Grenz)-wache," he clearly conceived of it as an Arabic *ḥal* or second object to the di-transitive verb *arsalanī*. However, what his vocalization and placing of diacritics yield is the meaning "military post, station," which would not properly describe an individual such as the commander Ibn Mughira. Also, the term *mustalahat* is unattested in the lexica; it could be a noun of place derived from the verb *istalaha*, an increased form,

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>291</sup> J. Schleifer in *EI*, II, 142, s.v. Ghassān (misprinted as 150 in Grohmann, 15 note 4), wrongly thought that the phylarchate was bestowed on Arethas in 529, which dating was followed by Grohmann (p. 16). However, according to Malalas, Arethas was already phylarch in 528, the date of the anti-Mundir expedition. Grohmann did not use Nöldeke's monograph nor his Greek and Syriac sources for 6th-century Ghassānid history.

<sup>292</sup> Compare the treatment above of events of the 520s.

<sup>293</sup> Grohmann (pp. 15–16) mentions the anti-Mundir expedition and concludes that the sending of Ibn Mughira was a precautionary measure resulting from the military situation: the dispatch "bildet wohl eine im Rahmen der militärischen Ereignisse sich ergebende Massnahme."

<sup>294</sup> Cf. the many names given in Malalas' accounts of the punitive expedition and of the battle of Callinicum, above, 69–70, and below, 136–39.

<sup>295</sup> As is clear from his pointing: Grohmann, p. 17.

which is also unattested. The common term is *maslaḥa*, which can mean a military post or the troops that man it, a collective term; the common word for an individual member of such a *maslaḥa* is *maslahiyy*.<sup>296</sup>

There are two possible interpretations for the last three words of the inscription: either they refer to a federate rebel named Sulaymān Musayliḥa who revolted against the Ghassānid king Arethas, or they refer to a toponym, a frontier guard post named Sulaymān. In the first case, the three words in question may be transliterated *ʿalā Sulaymān Musayliḥat*: (sent) “against Sulaymān Musayliḥat.” It is possible that this person was a federate chief who rebelled against Arethas after the latter had been placed over non-Ghassānids. Of non-Ghassānid federate groups to which Sulaymān might have belonged and that are likely to have rebelled, the Salīḥids, whom the Ghassānids worsted and replaced, come to mind. It is possible that the discontented non-Ghassānid phylarchs who fled from the battle of Callinicum in 531 were Salīḥids. For vocalizing the second word as *musayliḥat*, a diminutive, there are parallels in the Arabic onomasticon, such as Musaylimat. The root of *musayliḥat* is *slḥ*, the same root as for *Salīḥ*. The proper name Sulaymān, the biblical Solomon, also may point to a connection with the last king of the Salīḥids, David (Dāwūd).<sup>297</sup>

However, we would expect a normal Arabic way of referring to this individual, that is, by name and patronymic (compare Ibrāhīm ibn-Mughīra). The omission of the particle *ibn*, though, may simply have been through the stonemason's inadvertence. The diminutive may be a somewhat contemptuous reference to a rebel, calling him not “son of” or “the Salīḥid” but “the little Salīḥid.”<sup>298</sup> Also, by this time some of Byzantium's Arab federates were abandoning the Arab way of referring to themselves and adopting something closer to the Roman practice, originally the *tria nomina* of classical times but somewhat changed by the early Byzantine period. Some Ghassānid phylarchs thus appear without patronymics, with their given names preceded by Flavius (originally a *gentilicium*)<sup>299</sup> in inscriptions. In the present one, the Ghassānid king is not given his patronymic, just the qualifier *malik*, “king.” The phrase *Sulaymān msylḥt* may be a construct phrase, composed of the personal name

<sup>296</sup> On this see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut, 1955), II, 487; and E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (repr. New York, 1956), I, pt. IV, 1403.

<sup>297</sup> On the Salīḥids see *BAFIC*. The person in question might have been a Kindite who rebelled against the newly appointed Ghassānid supreme phylarch. However, the biblical name Sulaymān is more likely to be Salīḥid, not to mention the name Musayliḥa.

<sup>298</sup> There is a parallel in Arabic poetry, where the Kindite prince and poet Imru' al-Qays is referred to contemptuously by the diminutive Muray' al-Qays: see C. Lyall, ed., *The Dīwān of ʿAbīd ibn al-ʿAbras* (Leiden, 1913), p. 30, verse 29.

<sup>299</sup> A telling indication of the extent of Romanization among the Ghassānid phylarchs; on these Greek inscriptions, see below, 489–512.

followed by what might also be a toponym in the genitive serving to describe and identify the person: not any Sulaymān, but Sulaymān of *msylḥt*.<sup>300</sup> According to this, the toponym could be one in the Jabal Usays area with which Sulaymān was associated, a place name reading either *Musayliḥat* or *Mustalahat*, depending on the diacritics supplied.

This brings up the second possible case: the three words in question might be translated “he sent me to, put me in command of, Sulaymān, his fortress.” According to this, the preposition *‘alā* would mean not “against” but “over,”<sup>301</sup> and the final letter in *msylḥ* would thus be not a *ta marbūṭa* but an *-h*, the pronominal suffix “his,” referring to Arethas and stating that the military station named Sulaymān was under Arethas’ jurisdiction. Thus syntactically *Musayliḥib* is a noun in apposition to Sulaymān. In support of this hypothesis one may observe, first, that a place with a personal name is not surprising. Parallels are known: for example, the name of Ḥārith himself was given to the mountain in the Gaulanitis. The area of the structure being treated is hallowed by biblical associations; nearby is Dayr Ayyūb, the “monastery of Job,” and King Solomon was associated with the region as far as Palmyra/Tadmur,<sup>302</sup> as was known in sixth-century Byzantium. A watch post in this area might well have been called Sulaymān, “Solomon.”<sup>303</sup>

The string *msylḥt/h* can also be read as *Mustalah* or *Musalah* followed by the pronominal suffix *hi*, “his.” The former is uncommon, although possible as a derivative from the equally uncommon verb *istalahā*; the latter is the more common form. We do have the noun *maslah* or *maslahat*, a military post, and the *msylḥ* of the inscription would be the diminutive of the former, *musayliḥ*.<sup>304</sup> Construing this as in apposition to Sulaymān is paralleled in the inscription by the usage of following a proper noun by a common noun, as in *al-Ḥārith al-malik*, instead of “the king al-Ḥārith.”

<sup>300</sup> The restrictive genitive is illustrated in the Arabic onomasticon by such names as Thābit Quṭna, Ḥārith al-Jawlān, etc.

<sup>301</sup> A normal signification for *‘alā* in the military language of the period.

<sup>302</sup> On Justinian and his fortification of Palmyra as a Solomonic foundation, see below, 172–74.

<sup>303</sup> Sulaymān also appears as a toponym in Tunisia, a village at the entrance of the al-Waṭan al-Quiblī peninsula in the northeast of the country. There is also a Salmān in Iraq, where Nawfal son of ‘Abd-Manāf, of the Prophet Muḥammad’s clan, died; Yaqūt, *Mu’jam* (Beirut, 1957), III, 239. Better still and closer to Usays is Hiṣn Sulaymān, “the fortress of Sulaymān,” near Ṣafita in present-day Syria.

<sup>304</sup> The term *Musailiḥa* (Msailiḥa in colloquial) has survived as a toponym, a case of the evolution of common noun to proper noun (e.g., ḥīra/Ḥīra). It survives to this day as a toponym in Lebanon spelled Mousseiliḥa; see R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale* (Paris, 1937), 71. An illustration of the fortress Qal‘at al-Musayliḥa is given in T. S. R. Boase, *Castles and Churches of the Crusading Kingdoms* (Oxford, 1967), 46; cf. also 41–42 for the spelling Msailiḥa. Musayliḥa is also a mountain near Khaybar, according to the reliable Sa‘udi scholar Ḥ. Jāsir.



Support for this second alternative comes from the historical situation. By this time Arethas was king with jurisdiction over his *foederati* in Oriens. He would naturally have made administrative deployments like the dispatching of the commander Ibn Mughīra to Sulaymān, especially in a Ghassānid-controlled frontier region like that in which the inscription was found. Indeed, *msylh* really means a frontier post, which further supports this second interpretation.<sup>305</sup>

### B. The Commander: Ibn Mughīra

Let us now consider the identity of Ibn Mughīra and the reference to Arethas as "the king." The commander's name is given in the inscription as Ibrāhīm ibn-Mughīra al-Awsī. The biblical name Ibrāhīm/Abraham is known in the pre-Islamic Arabic onomasticon.<sup>306</sup> He came from Yathrib in Ḥijāz (see below), which provides a background for his assumption of a biblical name: he either was a Christian or was influenced by Judaism, which was strong in Yathrib among the Aws.<sup>307</sup> We may compare another inscription from the Jabal Usays region that names Ya'qūb ibn-Mughīra (Jacob son of Mughīra), another biblical given name with the same patronymic. This might be either Ibrāhīm's brother or a later descendant.<sup>308</sup> The epigraphic attestation of the name of the first patriarch in the Usays inscription is also of some importance for Koranic studies. Previously it was argued that the name in its Arabic form, Ibrāhīm, first appears in the Koran;<sup>309</sup> but this sixth-century attestation dates from at least a hundred years before the Koran.<sup>310</sup>

<sup>305</sup> Ibn Mughīra's assignment to guard the frontier from his post Mustalah/Musayliḥ is reminiscent of the Ghassānid phylarch's description of himself in a Greek inscription as ὄρικος, a frontier officer, possibly a *limitaneus*; see below, 511–12. We may now add the term *maslahah/mustalah/musayliḥa* to known pre-Islamic military terms used in the limitrophe such as *ḥira*, *maṣna'*, and *manzar*.

<sup>306</sup> It was, however, a rare name and, according to Hishām al-Kalbī, borne by only one pre-Islamic Arab, Ibrāhīm the uncle of the Ḥīran poet 'Adi ibn-Zayd. See L. Cheikho, *al-Naṣrāniyya wa 'Ādābuhā bayna 'Arab al-Jāhiliyya* (Beirut, 1912), 231, with more instances; cf. 229 on its comparative rarity.

<sup>307</sup> See Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1960), I, 257. See also al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 648, on Sha's, a chief of the Aws, who converted to Judaism.

<sup>308</sup> For this Ya'qūb, see al-'Ushsh, "Kitābat 'Arabiyya," 293–94. However, the *ghayn* of "Mughīra" is not written identically in the two inscriptions. The *istighfār* in the second inscription need not imply that Ya'qūb was a Muslim, since "forgiveness" is common also in Christian invocations, e.g., the inscription of the Christian physician Sulaymān ibn-Ṣalība from Jabal Usays in the Umayyad period (*ibid.*, 283–84). A certain al-Awsī is also attested in the second half of the 7th century, and he is clearly a Christian, with the patronymic ibn-'Abd al-Masīḥ; he may be related to the Aws who fought with the Ghassānids in the 6th century and whose family remained in Syria as Christians in early Islamic times. See Cheikho, *Naṣrāniyya*, 474.

<sup>309</sup> See A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Baroda, 1938), 45–46.

<sup>310</sup> Arabic knew many forms for "Abraham": Ibrāhīm, Abrāhām, Ibrāham, Ibrahim; see Cheikho, *Naṣrāniyya*, 229. The reading "Ibrāhīm," however, is not certain; see the illustration, above, 118.

Ibrāhīm's designation as al-Awsī affiliates him to the tribe of al-Aws<sup>311</sup> in Yathrib/Medina, an even more important factor. This means he was an Arab from a city the two tribes of which, al-Aws and al-Khazraj, were closely related to the Ghassānids as Azdites. This fits in with what was said earlier about how the Ghassānids aided the Azd tribes of Medina in their struggle with the Jews of that city in the first quarter of the sixth century.<sup>312</sup> Subsequently the Arabs of Yathrib were recruited into the army of their relatives the Ghassānids and presumably sent a contingent to fight with them in Oriens.<sup>313</sup> This recruitment may have been the work of Abū Karib, phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, whose jurisdiction reached deep into Ḥijāz. Procopius criticized his handing over of the Phoinikōn region to Justinian, with his usual animus; but the appearance of Ibn Mughīra in the service of the Ghassānids suggests that in fact Phoinikōn was a valuable accession to the Roman dominion, as it left its master Abū Karib well placed to reach out to Yathrib for raising troops who would fight for Byzantium.<sup>314</sup>

Alongside the Arabic literary sources that document the relations of the Ghassānids of Oriens with their kinsmen in Yathrib, the Usays inscription gives epigraphic attestation of this relationship, establishing that it went back to around 528. We see also the infusion of new blood into the Arab *foederati* in Oriens, namely, Aws of Medina; and the extension of Ghassānid, hence Byzantine, influence deep into Ḥijaz where Yathrib and its Arabs were to become members of the Outer Shield<sup>315</sup> of federate tribes. The Azdite affiliation of the Ghassānids was thus producing beneficial results in extending Byzantine influence in western Arabia.

#### Arethas the King, *al-Malik*

This inscription illuminates both Arethas' *Basileia* and his relation with his brother Abū Karib. The attestation of Arethas' kingship in a contemporary inscription complements the references to it in Arabic literary sources. Since the inscription calls him not "king of the Ghassānids"<sup>316</sup> but "the king,"

<sup>311</sup> Al-Aws, in the relative adjective al-Awsī, must be the well-known Arab tribe of Yathrib/Medina, al-Aws b. Ḥāritha; see the index in W. Caskel, *Ġamharat an-Nasab: Das genealogische Werk des Ḥiṣām ibn Muḥammad al-Kalbī* (Leiden, 1966), II, 214, with a list of individuals bearing this name. That the Aws in Ibn Mughīra's name must be the Yathrib tribe fits the facts of Ghassānid relations with Yathrib, which were especially brisk in the first quarter of the 6th century, during which the Ghassānids helped the Aws (and the Khazraj) against the Jews of Yathrib. This provides background for the appearance of this Awsite in the Ghassānid army in 528/29. This tribe uses the relative adjective al-Awsī, e.g., 'Arāba in Hishām, *Jamharat*, 638 note 2.

<sup>312</sup> See above, 38.

<sup>313</sup> They are attested in the army of the Ghassānids later in the century; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>314</sup> See below, 126–27.

<sup>315</sup> On the Outer Shield see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

<sup>316</sup> As his father was called; see *Martyrs*, 63.



equivalent to ὁ βασιλεύς, one may ask whether this was the extraordinary *Basileia* conferred by Justinian in 529 or just an elliptical expression for the Ghassānid *Basileia* to which he had succeeded on his father's death in 528. We must juxtapose the title of king with the dating clause, which is by the Era of Bostra, without the month being given.<sup>317</sup> This era reckoning begins with 22 March A.D. 105, giving a date for the carving of the inscription not before the latter part of 528, after Jabala's death in June/July of that year (the Bostra year ending in March 529).

We see that Arethas, the commander-in-chief, does not himself go to the Jabal Usays region but delegates his authority by sending a subordinate commander, most probably recruited by Abū Karib. Since Ibn Mughīra was, though related to the Ghassānids, technically an Azdite from the Aws of Yathrib, his dispatch could mean that Arethas was in charge of non-Ghassānid troops.<sup>318</sup> Also, Ibn Mughīra's destination was not within Arethas' own province of Arabia but in Phoenicia Libanensis, showing that Arethas as supreme phylarch was exercising extra-provincial authority beyond the boundaries of Arabia, at least over Ghassānids. In addition to the foregoing, there will be more to say on the significance of the evidence of the Usays inscription with regard to frontier problems and Ghassānid-built structures in Oriens.<sup>319</sup>

#### IX. ABŪ KARIB

Procopius provides data not only on Arethas but also on Abū Karib.<sup>320</sup> Although he does not state that the two Ghassānid phylarchs were brothers, he does give relatively precise data on Abū Karib's Byzantine connection. In addition to this sole mention, datable to around 530, two other sources mention him: a Syriac manuscript that presents him as an important figure in the history of the Monophysite movement; and a Sabaic inscription from South Arabia that shows him as a participant in the diplomatic and political life of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>321</sup> Both attestations suggest that he was still alive around 540.

First we must examine the Procopius passage, which comes in his long digression on the peoples of the Red Sea that serves as background for the embassy of Julian around 530.<sup>322</sup>

<sup>317</sup> Since the year 423 of the Era of Bostra ended on 21 March 529, it is possible to date the inscription to the early part of 529. Unfortunately the month is not given as it is in the Namāra inscription.

<sup>318</sup> In the 550s he takes on a phylarch named Aswad in Palaestina Prima; see below, 251–55. At the beginning of his *Basileia* he would have been too occupied; later he could have attended to insubordination personally without having to delegate authority.

<sup>319</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>320</sup> *History*, I.xix.8–13.

<sup>321</sup> On these two documents see *BASIC I.2*, 845–50.

<sup>322</sup> *History*, *ibid.*; trans. H. B. Dewing (London-Cambridge, Mass., 1935), 181.

This coast immediately beyond the boundaries of Palestine is held by Saracens, who have been settled from of old in the Palm Groves. These groves are in the interior, extending over a great tract of land, and there absolutely nothing grows except palm trees. The Emperor Justinian had received these palm groves as a present from Abochorabus, the ruler of the Saracens there, and he was appointed by the emperor captain over the Saracens in Palestine. And he guarded the land from plunder constantly, for both to the barbarians over whom he ruled and no less to the enemy, Abochorabus always seemed a man to be feared and an exceptionally energetic fellow. Formally, therefore, the emperor holds the Palm Groves, but for him really to possess himself of any of the country there is utterly impossible. For a land completely destitute of human habitation and extremely dry lies between, extending to the distance of a ten days' journey; moreover the Palm Groves themselves are by no means worth anything, and Abochorabus only gave the form of a gift, and the emperor accepted it with full knowledge of the fact. So much then for the Palm Groves.

This passage yields some interesting data. First, it gives some idea of the location of the "Palm Groves," Phoinikōn. The place is specified to be in the interior, not on the coast, to be extensive, and to be a palm oasis ten days' journey from the Roman frontier of Palestine. Procopius sets it in a passage that describes places outside the Roman frontier. It is not in Sinai<sup>323</sup> but somewhere in northern Ḥijāz, though difficult to locate exactly. It is stated that Phoinikōn was an oasis owned by Abū Karib who gave it to Justinian as a present. This donation represents the extension of Roman rule over a considerable extent of territory outside the frontier, since the intervening area was, according to Procopius, also given to Byzantium. In return, Justinian appointed Abū Karib phylarch over the Saracens of Palestine, with clearly the first event preceding the second. This appointment changed Abū Karib's status from that of an Arab chief to that of the phylarch of a Roman province and an officer in the Roman military system in the south of Oriens, with a jurisdiction stretching from northern Ḥijāz to Palestine.

Unusually, Procopius praises the Saracen chief, calling him "a man to be feared, exceptionally energetic."<sup>324</sup> He also explicitly describes a phylarch's function, the protection of Roman territory from raids by the pastoralists of Arabia. However, he dilutes his praise by remarking on the uselessness of the newly acquired territory, yet another trace of *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>325</sup> We may now set

<sup>323</sup> Thus excluding its location in Sinai; so Stein, *HBE*, 298 note 1, *contra* Devreesse.

<sup>324</sup> On Abū Karib in contemporary Arabic poetry see *BASIC II*.

<sup>325</sup> See below, 297–306.

these data against the background of sixth-century Ghassānid history, giving the Procopius passage a proper context.

The background of this transaction between Abū Karib and Byzantium must be the return of the Ghassānids to Byzantine service. It has already been suggested that they had withdrawn to Ḥijāz,<sup>326</sup> where they had had a power base since the fifth century. We know from epigraphy that Procopius' "Abochorabus" is in fact Abū Karib, son of Jabala and brother of Arethas, though the historian does not give his patronymic nor his Ghassānid affiliation.<sup>327</sup> We can also correctly date the beginning of Abū Karib's phylarchate. Procopius' ethnographic digression comes after his account of the battle of Callinicum in April 531 and precedes his account of the embassy of Julian.<sup>328</sup> The ethnographic passage is meant to explain to the reader something about the peoples and regions to which Julian was sent, and does not necessarily describe events of the same date as the embassy. Abū Karib's donation most likely occurred earlier, in 528.

The Ghassānid's possession of an oasis in Ḥijāz must go back to when the Ghassānids withdrew from Byzantium and marched to Ḥijāz; his presentation of the region to the Byzantine emperor has all the signs of a reconciliation between two formerly estranged parties. So too does the endowment of Abū Karib with the phylarchate: the presentation was an expression of loyalty, and the award of rank was one of confidence in a reconciled ally.

This voluntary presentation of an extensive territory for incorporation within the Roman Empire is an extraordinary transaction. It expanded the Roman frontier in Ḥijāz and Arabia to the farthest point since the frontier's withdrawal after the annexation of Nabataea by Trajan in A.D. 106. It was effected not by military conquest but by a voluntary *cessio*<sup>329</sup> on the part of a former ally. Not only the oasis but the territory between it and Palestine now became Roman. It was, however, Roman territory guarded not by Roman troops but by the Ghassānid *foederati* themselves. This is articulated by Procopius when he says that "Formally . . . the emperor holds the Palm Groves but for him really to possess himself of any of the country there is utterly impossible." Thus the newly acquired territory may properly be described as belonging to the Outer Shield,<sup>330</sup> the realm of indirect Byzantine influence and

<sup>326</sup> See above, 36–39.

<sup>327</sup> As Nöldeke was unaware that Abū Karib and Arethas were brothers, he erroneously thought that the Byzantines conceived of Abū Karib and Qays the Kindite as counterbalances to the power of Arethas, the supreme phylarch (*GF*, 17 note 1).

<sup>328</sup> See below, 144–48.

<sup>329</sup> On *cessio* in the 5th century see *BAFIC*, 82–91; in that case Byzantium ceded, albeit fictitiously, Byzantine territory to the Arab chief of Iotabe.

<sup>330</sup> On the Outer Shield see *BAFIC*, 478–79.

rule through their federates. As is clear from Procopius, the new territory became part of Palaestina Tertia.

Procopius states, vaguely, that Justinian made Abū Karib the phylarch of Palestine. This was a tripartite province—which part is meant here? Secunda, where the Ghassānid power base already was, was too far, as was Prima, itself the location of the phylarchs of the Parembolē. Abū Karib got Tertia, already a vast area including Sinai and the regions east of Wādī ʿAraba, even without the new addition that took ten days to traverse. We can ask if Abū Karib's phylarchate was indeed coterminous with this entire area on both sides of Wādī ʿAraba.<sup>331</sup> Perhaps an enclave was left for the Kindites in the Negev and northern Sinai.<sup>332</sup>

Abū Karib had ruled over the Saracens of Phoinikōn, presumably Ghassānids from the earlier emigration; Justinian extended his rule over the Arabs of northern Ḥijāz as part of his phylarchate, Arabs who were in part Ghassānids but also belonged to other tribal groups living in the Ḥiṣmā region, such as Juḍām, Balī, and ʿUḍra. Thus Abū Karib became phylarch over members of many groups, not unlike his brother Arethas who was over a multi-tribal, heterogeneous collection of federates in the south of Oriens. Perhaps this might underlie Procopius' statement that Arethas was put in charge of as many tribes *as possible*,<sup>333</sup> in other words, except for those under the rule of his brother Abū Karib.

Although he praises Abū Karib, Procopius is ambivalent, expatiating on the uselessness of Phoinikōn to the empire and ambiguously referring to his rule over the Saracens of Palestine, whom he pejoratively terms *barbaroi*. Once more, this rhetoric is part of his *Kaiserkritik*. He obscured the relationship between the two brothers, not giving Abū Karib his Ghassānid affiliation or his patronymic as son of Jabala (the latter appearing only in the full name of Arethas).<sup>334</sup> The historian's unsympathetic attitude toward Arethas had already been remarked upon; perhaps it colored his view of Abū Karib as well, making him give the reader to understand that all Ghassānids were black sheep. By praising Abū Karib as "energetic and formidable,"<sup>335</sup> he may be presenting a backhanded contrast to Arethas, whom he portrayed as an incompetent traitor. He also conceals the fact that the Saracens in Palaestina Tertia

<sup>331</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 976–82.

<sup>332</sup> If Arethas the Kindite was the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, as is likely, then Abū Karib was probably appointed to this post just after the former's death in 528, which fits with the time of the Ghassānids' return to Byzantine service. On Abū Karib's relation to the Kindite successor of Arethas in Palestine, see below, 153–60.

<sup>333</sup> See above, 98–103.

<sup>334</sup> *History*, I.xvii.47.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

over whom Abū Karib was placed as phylarch were not roaming pastoralists but *foederati*. He does term him phylarch, a Byzantine office that entailed federate status,<sup>336</sup> but uses it ambiguously,<sup>337</sup> not acknowledging the close ties between the Ghassānids and the empire.

Procopius speaks of the oasis as a gift to Justinian personally. Justinian may indeed have had personal experience in Oriens, serving as *magister militum* before his accession, and may have known some of these Ghassānid phylarchs personally.<sup>338</sup> If the gift was not a personal one, Procopius may have made it out as such only to show the emperor's stupidity in accepting such a gift from Abū Karib. Clearly his supercilious remarks on the value of Phoinikōn are related to his *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>339</sup> The point was not the fertility of the annexed territory but its strategic, political, and commercial position in western Arabia, part of Justinian's enlightened Arabian policy which Procopius describes in a way that amounts to a condemnation.

Did Procopius in fact know of Abū Karib's Ghassānid affiliation? The facts of the transaction involving a distant chief would have been known to him only through an official document, comparable to the source Theophanes must have used much later on the events of around 500, which gave precise information on the Ghassānids' and Kindites' tribal affiliations. If Procopius had such a document, it would have contained this information.

There are further problems connected with the career of Abū Karib at this stage. The first is the exact identification of Phoinikōn. Procopius' data do not suffice to pinpoint its location. The mention of ten days' journey from the Byzantine frontier of Palaestina Tertia is problematic since the starting point is not specified: was it Ayla, Iotabe, or some other point on the shifting frontier? Ten days by what means—the rate of a camel rider, a caravaner, or a horseman? For the location of Phoinikōn various oases in northern Ḥijaz have been proposed: Dūmat al-Jandal, Tabūk, and even al-'Ulā, the ancient Dedān;<sup>340</sup> the first two have established connections with Byzantium.<sup>341</sup>

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>337</sup> This leaves the reader in doubt as to whether the term "phylarch" in this passage means an Arab chief or a Byzantine phylarch. Procopius uses Σαρακηνοί for Byzantium's Arab allies, not the technical term σύμμαχοι which would have conveyed their Byzantine connection. In Menander's account of the 561 peace treaty with Persia he describes the Ghassānids accurately as οἱ σύμμαχοι Σαρακηνοί; see below, 267–68.

<sup>338</sup> As Malalas says that he wrote personally to the Ghassānid phylarchs before the anti-Mundir expedition; cf. above, 70–71.

<sup>339</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 376–78. Stein correctly understood the significance of Phoinikōn; see *HBE*, 298.

<sup>340</sup> See A. Musil, *The Northern Hejaz* (New York, 1926), 308, favoring Dūmat, though this is debatable.

<sup>341</sup> Especially in the Arabic sources on the Arab conquests. Tabūk was the southernmost Byzantine post in Arabia, representing the place where Byzantine *Shām*, Oriens, ended, as is

Although Procopius makes the oasis out to be insignificant for Byzantium, it is mentioned twice in sixth-century documents close to this date. It appears in Nonnosus' account of his embassy to the Arabs<sup>342</sup> and in the *Martyrium Arethae*. These two sources clearly imply that it was an important Byzantine outpost in Arabia. From the *Martyrium* it appears to have been the southernmost of such outposts: the writer describes Ḥimyar (South Arabia) as being *μὸνὰς τριάκοντα* distant from Phoinikōn, "which now belongs to the Romans."<sup>343</sup>

We may also ask whether Abū Karib's phylarchate over Palaestina Tertia covered Iotabe, the strategically located island at the mouth of the Gulf of Elath that belonged to that portion of the province, as some scholars have thought.<sup>344</sup> It is possible, but there is no evidence. Procopius, however, does say of Iotabe that "on this island Hebrews had lived from old in autonomy, but in the reign of this Justinian they have become subject to the Romans."<sup>345</sup> Since the Arabs had previously had a connection with the island since the days of Amorkesos in the fifth century,<sup>346</sup> it may be that Justinian gave some form of supervision over Iotabe back to Abū Karib after Anastasius had terminated it around 500. Since the Ghassānids had been fighting the Jews in Ḥijāz, the Ghassānid phylarch may well have been given the task of putting an end to Jewish sovereignty in the island. As Procopius, who disliked the Ghassānids, does not mention the agent who subjected the island to Roman rule, it may be indirect evidence that it was the Ghassānid who did so. Another interpretation for the suppression of Jewish autonomy in Iotabe at this time has, however, been put forward.<sup>347</sup> According to this hypothesis, it was Aratius, the

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clear from the account of Muḥammad's campaign against it; see al-Wāqidī, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, ed. M. Jones (Oxford, 1966), III, 1021. Evidently it was recovered by the Ghassānids and the Byzantines after their return to Oriens in 628/29. Some *foederati* may even have stayed there during the Persian occupation of Oriens. On Tabūk in the Byzantine context see H. Lammens, *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'Hégire* (Beirut, 1928), 317–19. On al-Tabūkiyya, the caravan route that passed through Tabūk into Trans-Jordan (as opposed to the other route that extended to Ayla), see *ibid.*, 318. The location of Phoinikōn has led to speculation on Abū Karib's Arabian jurisdiction. Smith's map makes Phoinikōn include Tabūk, Taymā', Madā'in Sāliḥ, and Dedān (al-'Ulā); see S. Smith, "Events in Arabia in the Sixth Century," *BSOAS* 16 (1954), opp. 426. So does Trimmingham, adding Leuke Kome: J. S. Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (Beirut, 1939; new ed., London-New York, 1979), 276 (cf. 124 in new ed.).

<sup>342</sup> On Phoinikōn in Nonnosus see BASIC II.

<sup>343</sup> *Martyrium Arethae*, *ActaSS*, Octobris X, 722.

<sup>344</sup> Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 271, and Smith, "Events in Arabia," 443.

<sup>345</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xix.4. Procopius' expression "*this* Justinian" prevents us from thinking that he wanted to glorify Justinian at the expense of Anastasius. I am in agreement with Avi-Yonah, *Jews of Palestine*, 253.

<sup>346</sup> See BAFIC, 67.

<sup>347</sup> See F. M. Abel, "L'île de Jotabè," *RB* 47 (1938), 529–32, drawing on Choricus of Gaza, for whom see below, 184–85. The Arab Yūḥannā ibn-Ru'ba was *not* the chief of the Israelite community in Ayla, as Abel thought (*ibid.*, 529), but either a phylarch or a bishop



*dux* of Palestine, who suppressed the Jews after they had destroyed the church of the Theotokos on the island. Although this is plausible, even if this was the case, Abū Karib would have participated in the military operation since he was so close in Palaestina Tertia.<sup>348</sup>

The possible role of Abū Karib in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt has already been discussed:<sup>349</sup> he may have taken part in the military operations centering around the Iron Mountain in Trans-Jordania, and have sold the Samaritan captives in the "Indian parts," the Red Sea area.<sup>350</sup> The location of his jurisdiction in both Palaestina Tertia and northern Ḥijāz would have made this possible. This location also makes it not unlikely that he also took part in the operations of the Azd tribes of Medina against its Jews. While these are associated with his father and grandfather, Jabala and Ḥārith, he too may have taken part in them in the 520s while the Ghassānids were not in the service of Byzantium.<sup>351</sup>

Abū Karib did not participate in the operations of his relatives of the house of Jabala in Oriens during the first Persian war. This confirms the presumption that his assignment was really Arabian—defending the southern frontiers of Oriens against the inroads of the Arabian pastoralists. It is also possible that the Ghassānids, who had already once fallen out with Byzantium, wanted a member of the family to stay deep in Arabia where they could return in case of repeated discord with Byzantium, as was to happen later in the sixth century.

In spite of the paucity of sources on Abū Karib, he emerges as an important factor in the world of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justinian, a phylarch with a strong presence in western Arabia. So does his Phoinikōn, belittled by Procopius, in the history of Byzantine diplomacy and international trade in the sixth century.

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who submitted to Muḥammad, as is clear from Wāqidi (*Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, III, 1031; cf. above, note 341).

<sup>348</sup> Abū Karib thus may have taken part in such an operation rather than in the suppression of the Samaritan revolt in distant Palaestina Prima. It is surprising that Trimmingham attributes the entire operation against the Jews of Iotabe to him, eliminating the role of Ariatius; see his *Christianity among the Arabs*, 276.

<sup>349</sup> See above, 83–84.

<sup>350</sup> Idrisi speaks of an island in the northern part of the Red Sea that was inhabited by Samaritans in the 12th century; this could confirm the sale of Samaritans by Abū Karib in the Red Sea area. See Abel, "L'île de Jotabè," 535.

<sup>351</sup> Glaser suggested that the South Arabian king named Abū Karib who warred against Medina was actually the Ghassānid phylarch; E. Glaser, "Zwei Inschriften über den Dammbruch von Marib," *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft* 6 (1897), 85; this is an attractive suggestion. Abū Karib's relation to Medina may be supported by the Usays inscription in which the commander called al-Awsī, a general in the army of Arethas, belonged to the famous tribe al-Aws of Medina. Thus Abū Karib would have acted as liaison officer between the Arabs of Medina and his brother Arethas, after the support he gave the Arab tribes against Medina's Jews.



## X. THE BATTLE OF DARAS, 530

The battle of Daras was Belisarius' first resounding victory after he was appointed *magister militum per Orientem* in 529. It is also the first battle of the first Persian war that was described in great detail by the chief historian of Justinian's reign,<sup>352</sup> who was an eyewitness, having been appointed Belisarius' *symbolos* in 527 when the latter was named commandant of Daras and *dux* of Mesopotamia.

In Procopius' account of the battle of Daras, the Ghassānids are conspicuous by their absence. It is possible they did not participate, but one may argue that in fact they did. The Ghassānid *foederati* emerged as virtually part of the *exercitus comitatensis*, the mobile field army that was moved from one sector of the oriental front to another, wherever its services were required. Thus they must have participated regularly in the annual campaigns of the army of the Orient. They were paid the *annona* precisely for this, and the *magister militum per Orientem* would not have kept them unoccupied. Also, they had under Arethas just been demonstrating their military worth in the last two years, in the campaign against Mundir and the Samaritan revolt. The following year they made a strong appearance at Callinicum with five thousand horse, almost one-fourth of the Roman army.<sup>353</sup> Thus one cannot believe that they were left out of Belisarius' calculations, especially since Procopius tells us that he had been ordered by Justinian to invade Persia and for that purpose "he collected a very formidable army and came to Daras."<sup>354</sup> Had the army been a local one recruited in Mesopotamia, the Ghassānids' non-participation might be understandable, but it was not. Belisarius fought the battle of Daras not as *dux* of Mesopotamia stationed at Daras but as *magister militum per Orientem* stationed at Antioch, and thus would have brought with him federate levies from the entire diocese, including the Ghassānids.

The number of ethnic groups and commanders who fought at Daras is remarkable. On the left wing there was Pharas the Herul, who commanded three hundred of his own people; also the Massagetae Saunicas and Aigon, with six hundred horsemen. On the right wing there were Simmas and Ascan, also Massagetae, who commanded six hundred horsemen.<sup>355</sup> Is it possible that the ethnic group native to this area and familiar with its terrain and climate—

<sup>352</sup> See *History*, I.xiii.9–xiv.55. For the sources of the battle of Daras other than Procopius, see Stein, *HBE*, 288 note 3. The battle is noticed very briefly by Stein (*ibid.*, 288), more expansively by Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 281–83; the clearest account with a map, however, may be found in Bury, *HLRE*, II, 82–85.

<sup>353</sup> On Callinicum, see below, 134–42.

<sup>354</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xiii.9.

<sup>355</sup> On the names of the commanders and Belisarius' dispositions, see Procopius, *History*, I.xiii.19–22.

the Arabs—would have been left out.<sup>356</sup> This is difficult to believe, especially as the sources do not record an engagement elsewhere in Oriens which might have forced the Ghassānids to stay away, like the Samaritan revolt in 529 that pinned them down in the south of Oriens.

Daras was a victory won entirely by the Byzantine horse; the cavalry arm was strong in the host Belisarius mustered. And this is just where the strength of the Ghassānids lay: they were horsemen, and this was their tactical function in the army of Oriens. Thus it is hard to believe that they were left out.

A close examination of Procopius' account of the battle of Callinicum in the following year, 531, clearly suggests that Arethas fought at Daras. Procopius gives himself away, perhaps unconsciously, when he says, in describing the composition of the Roman army before the battle was joined: "The commanders of cavalry were *all* the same ones who had previously fought the battle of Daras with Mirranes and the Persians."<sup>357</sup> Arethas, the cavalry commander, is referred to by name as taking part in Callinicum: "Arethas also came there to join them with the Saracen army."<sup>358</sup>

Malalas may also confirm Arethas' participation in the battle of Daras. While Procopius separates reference to Arethas from his account of Belisarius' march from Mesopotamia to Euphratesia and Syria,<sup>359</sup> Malalas does the opposite in his account of Callinicum, saying: "When the *magister militum* Belisarius learnt this, he came to support the *duces* with 8,000 men; among them was the phylarch Arethas with 5,000 men."<sup>360</sup> As we shall see, Malalas' account of the battle of Callinicum is more reliable than that of Procopius. From this account it could be inferred that Arethas and his *foederati* were with Belisarius in Mesopotamia<sup>361</sup> when he marched to the south. This raises the question of why the phylarch of the Provincia Arabia was not in the south of Oriens but in the north, in Mesopotamia. The presumption is that Belisarius, the victor of Daras and *magister militum* of the diocese, had anticipated a Persian counteroffensive to avenge their defeat at Daras, and so kept the mettle-

<sup>356</sup> Especially as Mesopotamia itself had its own Arabs and *foederati* other than the Ghassānids of the south. These and the region, called Roman 'Arab (Arabia) in Zacharia, were involved, and according to Zacharia it was against Roman 'Arab that the Persians directed an invasion after their defeat at Daras; see Zacharia, *HE*, p. 65, lines 13–15.

<sup>357</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xviii.6. The italics are mine.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xviii.7. The "Saracen army" referred to in this quotation was of course cavalry, since the Ghassānid contingent was always such, and this was its importance in the army of the Orient.

<sup>359</sup> See the preceding two footnotes.

<sup>360</sup> Malalas, *Chronicle*, trans. E. Jeffreys et al. (Melbourne, 1986), p. 270; Bonn ed., p. 416, lines 16–18.

<sup>361</sup> That Belisarius was in Mesopotamia before the battle of Callinicum is evident from Procopius, *History*, I.xviii.4.

some phylarch and his *foederati* with him in Mesopotamia after their contribution to his victory at Daras. However, this depends on whether or not Malalas' statement does imply that Arethas was with Belisarius in Mesopotamia before the latter marched to Euphratensis.

Most probably Arethas was personally known to Belisarius, and possibly to Justinian, as his father Jabala had been. It was Justinian who returned the Ghassānids to Byzantine service and who wrote to them to avenge the death of the Kindite chief killed by Mundir. Arethas' father had fought with Belisarius at the battle of Thannūris,<sup>362</sup> and possibly Arethas himself did so as well. Belisarius must have been impressed by the Ghassānids' war record, and taken them with him in 530 when he mustered his army for the invasion of Persia.

It was most probably in 529 that Justinian conferred on Arethas the extraordinary *Basileia* and the supreme phylarchate that put him in charge of almost all the Arab federates in all Oriens. Therefore it is natural that the new *magister militum per Orientem* resident in Antioch enlisted Arethas and his federates for the coming campaign against Persia in the north, since this was consonant with Arethas' new appointment as supreme phylarch and with Belisarius' appointment to the *magisterium*.<sup>363</sup>

In view of the foregoing, it is practically certain that the Ghassānid phylarch took part in the battle of Daras.<sup>364</sup> It is also likely that he would have distinguished himself and fought with enthusiasm, since this would have been his first battle since being named to the *Basileia*.<sup>365</sup> Perhaps it was on the basis of this that Belisarius enlisted him the following year to fight with him at Callinicum.

Procopius' prejudice against Arethas is well known, as is his technique for denigrating him by means of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*.<sup>366</sup> His account of the battle of Daras is one more instance of his employment of these devices.<sup>367</sup> In keeping with his well-known passage deprecating Justinian's conferment of the *Basileia* on Arethas,<sup>368</sup> in which he describes the latter as either

<sup>362</sup> Thus the battle of Thannūris links Belisarius with the Ghassānids and possibly Arethas; there he learned the trench tactic and used it effectively against the Persians at Daras. Cf. Procopius, *History*, I.xiii.13–15.

<sup>363</sup> Perhaps the two were simultaneously promoted by Justinian, one to the *magisterium* of Oriens, the other to its supreme phylarchate in 529, another link.

<sup>364</sup> Possibly at the right wing, in Procopius' words under various commanders and having "a large force of horsemen" (*History*, I.xiii.21). Since Arethas was on the right at Callinicum, he may have been there also at Daras, but he is studiously not named by Procopius.

<sup>365</sup> See his description of the *monomachia* between Andreas and two Persians in succession; *ibid.*, xiii.29–39. This is the sort of duel in which the Arabs excelled, with battles often being decided not so much by the opposing armies as by combats between individuals.

<sup>366</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 39–67, 362–82; cf. below, 297–306.

<sup>367</sup> An addition to the *suppressiones veri*.

<sup>368</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47–48.

a traitor or an unsuccessful warrior, Procopius then manipulated the participation of Arethas in the Persian war. He suppressed his participation in the battle of Daras, presumably because the phylarch had done well, and recorded his part in the battle of Callinicum the following year, going so far as to say that he betrayed the Roman cause.

#### XI. THE BATTLE OF CALLINICUM, 531

Just as Daras was a signal victory for Byzantium, so was Callinicum a signal defeat. What exactly happened to Roman arms on 19 April 531 has always been controversial, even to contemporaries.<sup>369</sup> The elucidation of the Arab profile of the battle, discussed in this section, should contribute to resolving this question.<sup>370</sup> Procopius and Malalas are the two principal sources<sup>371</sup> on which the discussion will turn. The main theme involving the Arabs is the *prodosia*, the accusation that they betrayed the Roman cause.

#### Procopius

In spite of the many pages Procopius devoted to the battle of Callinicum, his account of the involvement of the federate Ghassānid Arabs is brief and uncomplimentary, being haunted by the *prodosia* charge. In his description of the Byzantine army mustered by Belisarius to repel the Persian invasion of Euphratensis and Syria, he says: "Arethas also came there to join them with the Saracen army."<sup>372</sup> Important in this statement is the description of the Ghassānid contingent as an army, *στράτευμα*, a natural description since this was not the small force of a provincial phylarch but the army of the supreme phylarch in Oriens. In describing Belisarius' preparations for the coming battle, Procopius says that he stationed Arethas and all the Saracens "on the right where the ground rose sharply."<sup>373</sup> Thus Arab *foederati*, not only Ghassānids but also other tribal groups, occupied the right wing, importantly for the course of the battle. In placing Byzantium's Arab *foederati* on the right wing, Belisarius pitted them against the Arab *foederati* of the Persians under Mundir, whom Azarethes placed on his left wing. Thus the two opponents, Arethas the Ghassānid and Mundir the Lakhmid, stood facing each other.

Procopius records that, when battle was joined, "some placed themselves in the interval between the armies and made a display of valorous deeds

<sup>369</sup> For the battle see Bury, *HLRE*, II, 85–87; Stein, *HBE*, II, 292–93; Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 284–89, the most detailed.

<sup>370</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 43–48, 55–56, 371.

<sup>371</sup> Although Zacharia does not transmit many data, he does refer to the trench the Persians dug "according to their usual practice" (as does Malalas), and the Romans' having the wind in their faces; *HE*, p. 65, lines 20–21, 32–33.

<sup>372</sup> *History*, I.xviii.7.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

against each other."<sup>374</sup> This *monomachia* was the sort of fighting the Arabs were accustomed to in their wars, more than fighting as regular soldiers in the Roman army. In view of Procopius' strategy of silence about the Arabs and Arethas, it is possible that the Ghassānids displayed their valor on this occasion<sup>375</sup> but Procopius did not mention it.

The critical turn in the fortunes of the battle came after fighting had gone on for two-thirds of the day. Procopius says: "Then by *mutual agreements* (ξυμφρονήσαντες) all the best of the Persian army advanced to attack the Roman right wing, where Arethas and the Saracens had been stationed. But they broke their formation and moved apart, so that they got the reputation of having *betrayed* (προὔδοσαν) the Romans to the Persians. For without awaiting the oncoming enemy they *all* straightaway beat a hasty retreat. So the Persians in this way broke through the enemy's line and immediately got in the rear of the Roman cavalry."<sup>376</sup> This passage and the subsequent description of the course of the battle make it clear that Procopius held Arethas and the Arabs responsible for the defeat of Callinicum. A previous study has analyzed this passage, comparing it with Malalas' more detailed and sober account, and setting it within Procopius' *ira et studium* and *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>377</sup> The limitations of Procopius' narrative are clear: the brevity of his account of Arab participation and the vagueness of his reference are striking, all the more so in that he was writing a detailed account of Justinian's wars, not a world chronicle like Malalas. This enabled him to present the Arabs as traitors to the Roman cause and the instrument of their defeat, thus cloaking the fact that his hero, Belisarius, did not do well in his conduct of the battle.

It is noteworthy that in speaking of the Persian advance and charge he uses the word ξυμφρονήσαντες, carefully choosing it to suggest that the *prodosia* theme he concocted was in operation even before the battle, the implication being that Byzantium's Arab *foederati* had been in contact with those of Persia and that the breakthrough took place as a result of this complicity. This lets him say explicitly that the Saracens betrayed the Romans, a favorite theme with him. Thus the word ξυμφρονήσαντες is another untrustworthy item in his account.<sup>378</sup> Besides the conclusion of the earlier study rejecting the *prodosia* charge,<sup>379</sup> it may also be observed that, since the Arabs were paid the *annona* by Byzantium, it is inconceivable that they would have turned their back on the empire with which they had contracted a friendly alliance. The alternative, alliance with Persia, was unattractive and unfeasible. The Arab

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>375</sup> Another occasion, *ibid.*, 37.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 35–37, trans. Dewing; emphasis added.

<sup>377</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," esp. 43–48 on rejecting the *prodosia* charge.

<sup>378</sup> His claim that all the Saracens retreated is untrue, as is clear from Malalas.

<sup>379</sup> Cf. above, note 377.



*foederati* of Byzantium, of whatever tribal group, were zealous Christians; they fought against Persia as Christians against pagan fire-worshippers and the pagan Lakhmids their allies, the barbarities of the latter against the Christians of Oriens being well known. Thus it is equally inconceivable that they would have allied themselves with the Persian cause and betrayed the Christian Roman Empire. That some Arab federates and their phylarchs fled is vouched for by Malalas, but this absolves Arethas and his group, and such a flight could have explanations other than *prodosia*.<sup>380</sup> It could have been insubordination to Arethas, or panic at the powerful Persian charge.

This is Procopius' selective and uncomplimentary account of the Arab involvement in the defeat of Callinicum. The remaining portion of the narrative presents Belisarius in a favorable light, ascribing valorous deeds to him, while Malalas gives an entirely different picture of the *magister's* performance.

#### Malalas

Unlike Procopius' account, that of Malalas is shorter and more informative.<sup>381</sup> He does provide data on the Arab involvement. First, when Belisarius hears of the Perso-Lakhmid invasion of Roman territory,<sup>382</sup> he marches down from Mesopotamia with his troops, and "among them was the phylarch Arethas, with 5,000 men."<sup>383</sup> This is a valuable datum on the size of the Arab federate contingent in the army of Oriens. The large number was owing to its being not the contingent of a provincial phylarch but, as stated before, that of the phylarchate of Oriens under the command of the recently appointed supreme phylarch, Arethas. According to one estimate, Belisarius' army at Callinicum numbered twenty thousand: thus the Arab contingent was one-fourth of his force.<sup>384</sup> Arethas was stationed with his Saracens together with Dorotheos and Mamantios, the Isaurian exarchs.<sup>385</sup> Malalas speaks of their being stationed on the southern section, while it is also known from Procopius that they occupied the right wing of Belisarius' army. While Procopius speaks only of the Saracens as stationed on the right, Malalas supplies the information on the two Isaurian commanders, relevant for understanding what happened to the right wing during the battle.

Malalas tells us of two Arab chiefs who were killed in the battle.<sup>386</sup> The

<sup>380</sup> For Callinicum in more detail cf. "Procopius and Arethas," 55-56, and below, 139-42.

<sup>381</sup> Malalas' account is in *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 461-65.

<sup>382</sup> For Mundir's bold strategic conception see Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.30-39, with his speech to the Persian king. B. H. Liddell Hart noticed it in his *Strategy* (New York, 1991), 42-43.

<sup>383</sup> *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 461, lines 17-18.

<sup>384</sup> Stein, *HBE*, II, 292.

<sup>385</sup> *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 463, lines 11-13.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 463, lines 20-23.

first was Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān, Mundīr's son, who bore the same name as his grandfather who had attacked the Byzantine frontier under Anastasius. That he was the namesake of Mundīr's father could suggest that he was his eldest son.<sup>387</sup> Also, Malalas speaks of a duke named Abros who fought on the Roman side and was captured. Here *dux* is probably used loosely:<sup>388</sup> the person was most likely a Ghassānid phylarch in Arethas' army. The name is a good Ghassānid one, ʿĀmr, seeing that the Ghassānids were also called the "sons of ʿAmr," Banū ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir. Thus Malalas' ʿAmr was probably a relative of Arethas.

"After the Phrygians saw their exarch Apscal fall and his standard captured, they turned in flight and the Roman Saracens fled with them, but others continued fighting along with Arethas."<sup>389</sup> This is Malalas' most valuable statement on the Arab performance in the crucial stage of the battle. It was the flight of the Phrygians that started the panic in the Roman army. There was also a third flight, that of the Isaurians, who fled and jumped into the river after they saw the Saracens fleeing. All these contributed to the flight of Belisarius himself across the river. Malalas' account shows that the Arab share in the defeat was not a major one: they were only one of three groups that fled, and only part of them did. Also note the statement that "others continued fighting along with Arethas." This both exculpates Arethas from the charge of *prodosia* and shows that he stood his ground while others fled. This is consonant with his desire to live up to the expectations of the Romans who had recently appointed him supreme commander.<sup>390</sup> Those who stood with him must have been the Ghassānid contingent,<sup>391</sup> whose loyalty to him was unquestioned. One of them probably was the phylarch ʿAmr who was captured by the Persians; this could imply that he did not flee but stayed fighting until he was captured. The Ghassānid stand on the high ground around their king fits their reputation for *ṣabr*, tenacity and fortitude in adversity, as known from the Arabic sources.<sup>392</sup> Also note that the battle was fought

<sup>387</sup> Just as Jabala, son of Arethas, who died in the battle of 554, may have been his eldest, named after his grandfather; see below, 243.

<sup>388</sup> As suspected by Nöldeke, *GF*, 17 note 3; compare the expression referring to him as "from the Roman Saracens," ἐκ δὲ Ῥωμαίων Σαρακηνῶν. Had he been a Roman *dux* (as in *PLRE*, III, s.v. Abros), he would not have been labeled "Saracen," which indicates federate status.

<sup>389</sup> Σὺν αὐτοῖς δὲ καὶ οἱ Σαρακηνοὶ Ῥωμαίων, ἄλλοι δὲ ἐπέμεινον σὺν Ἀρεῖθα μαχόμενοι; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 464, lines 4–6.

<sup>390</sup> Especially as he had seen his father, Jabala, die at Thannūris when the horses could not jump the Persian trenches.

<sup>391</sup> These must have been his own troops whom he had commanded previously as phylarch, some of whom may well have belonged to the Ghassānid royal house. The phylarchs' names in the anti-Mundīr expedition suggest that they could have been his kinsmen, and so stood with him at Callinicum also.

<sup>392</sup> On the concept of *ṣabr* among the pre-Islamic Arabs, see H. Lammens, *L'Islam*,



on Holy Saturday. The phylarch's zeal for Christianity is well known, and the realization that he was fighting for the Christian Roman Empire against Persian fire-worshippers and pagans who worshiped the morning star<sup>393</sup> would have fortified his resolve to stand his ground. Thus, of the commanders at Callinicum named by Malalas, Arethas takes his place with Saunicas and Simmas<sup>394</sup> as one who acquitted himself well while others fled.

Malalas' account contributes to understanding the role of the Arabs and the resolution of the charge of *prodosia* by making clear that two groups of Arabs were involved: one that stood faithfully with Arethas—the Ghassānids—and another that fled in the Phrygians' wake. In Malalas' words the guarded accusation of *prodosia* that clings to the latter runs: "Some supposed that a number of the Saracens fled because of the treachery of the phylarchs." One must examine both the statement on those who fled and the *prodosia* theme in Malalas<sup>395</sup> and its genesis.

It is a fact that, together with other ethnic groups, part of the Arab *foederati* took to flight, and the motives for this flight must be sought. The chances are that if *prodosia* was involved, it was not toward Byzantium but toward Arethas. A motive might have been panic, the herd instinct of the Arab group when they saw the Phrygians take to flight; another might be inexperience in fighting under a unified command such as Arethas'; yet another, dissatisfaction among non-Ghassānid phylarchs that generated insubordination against the supreme phylarch, not against Byzantium.<sup>396</sup> The last requires a closer look.<sup>397</sup>

The structure of the sixth-century Arab phylarchate of Oriens was complex, composed of the dominant federate group, the Ghassānids, with two earlier phylarchal and federate layers, those of the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, the dominant groups in the fourth and fifth centuries respectively. There were also other tribal groups, such as Kinda, in the federate presence. The supreme phylarchate conferred on Arethas around 529 subordinated most or all of these phylarchs to the authority of the Ghassānid. This almost obliterated the tribal identity of these phylarchs, who were used to fighting as Tanūkhids or Salīhids or Kindites leading their own troops. This understandably sowed the

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*croyances et institutions* (Beirut, 1943), 16: "C'est une qualité positive supposant une tension énergétique et continuée. . . . C'est une ténacité indomptable à lutter contre la nature ennemie, contre les éléments implacables, contre les fauves du désert, et surtout contre les hommes." Lammens was thinking of the *sabr* of the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. That of the Ghassānids was proverbial; see BASIC II.

<sup>393</sup> In an encounter in the 540s Mundir captured Arethas' son and sacrificed him to the Arab goddess al-'Uzzā, the morning star; see below, 238.

<sup>394</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 464, lines 14–22.

<sup>395</sup> Repeating and expanding on "Procopius and Arethas."

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 55–56.

<sup>397</sup> See BAFOC and especially BAFIC dealing with the Salīhids.

seeds of dissatisfaction in the ranks of the federates, which could explain the non-Ghassānid phylarchs' lack of enthusiasm at Callinicum. Traces of friction between Arethas and the phylarchs of other tribal groups are discernible in the sources. In the 550s he clashed with a phylarch named al-Aswad, who was probably a Kindite,<sup>398</sup> and possibly with a Salīhid rebel<sup>399</sup> around 529. The chronographer speaks noticeably more precisely than Procopius when he attributes *prodosia* not to the federate troops but to their phylarchs.<sup>400</sup>

These phylarchs, the non-Ghassānid ones, especially the Salīhids, whom the Ghassānids had replaced recently as the principal Arab federate group, might have retained a grudge against the Ghassānids, which was enhanced by the recent advancement of Arethas to the supreme phylarchate. In the course of the battle when the fortunes of the Romans took a turn for the worse, these non-Ghassānid phylarchs did not feel they had to lay down their lives for the greater glory of the Ghassānid Arethas. So if the charge of *prodosia* can be made at all, it must be understood in this context. It is the only kind of *prodosia* that makes sense.

#### Procopius, Malalas, and the *Prodosia* Charge

This examination of the two authors' accounts of the Arabs at Callinicum now prompts a discussion of their veracity and their handling of the charge of *prodosia*. The comparative merits of the two authors, and which of them should be followed for a true account of the battle, have often been discussed.<sup>401</sup> The present treatment will concentrate on the Arab participation in the battle in the light of recent research.

The *History* of Procopius is a specialized account of the wars of Justinian written by a professional historian. Yet many features of his work have been negatively commented on by scholars: his omissions, his *ira et studium* (in this case *studium* for Belisarius), his prejudice against the Arabs, especially Arethas. Historians of the Persian wars have thus turned to Malalas the chronographer for a more accurate account of Callinicum. In his favor is the fact that the *Chronographia* is a sober narrative without any Procopius-style rhetorical speeches. Moreover, he is full of significant details that are essential to understanding the course and the stages of the battle, which Procopius omits.<sup>402</sup>

<sup>398</sup> See below, 251–55.

<sup>399</sup> Depending on whether or not the person in the Usays inscription was a Salīhid rebel; cf. above, 119–21.

<sup>400</sup> Κατὰ προδοσίαν τῶν φυλάρχων; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 464, lines 6–7.

<sup>401</sup> See Bury, *HLRE*, II, 85–87 with notes; Stein, *HBE*, II, 292–93; Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 498–502; for other monographic bibliography see “Procopius and Arethas,” 41 notes 7, 8.

<sup>402</sup> For example, Malalas records but Procopius omits the names of the various com-

Even if Malalas was partial to the Huns, this has no bearing on the account of the Arab participation in the battle. It is not right to dismiss him as a mere naive chronographer, not a professional historian: "It may very well be that Malalas, when compared with Procopius, is *kindlich*, and indeed a chronographer would be when compared with a historian. But for this very reason Malalas is the better author for our purpose, since the desideratum in this case is the *truth* about what happened at the right wing, and not whether the accounts are presented with the professional skill of a trained military thinker."<sup>403</sup>

The most crucial test for Malalas' veracity has not yet been applied—the sequel to the battle of Callinicum. This validates Malalas to the disadvantage of Procopius. The latter vilified Arethas and glorified Belisarius in his account of the battle, making the first the villain and the second the hero. The subsequent investigations and military operations, however, prove him false on both counts. After the defeat, Hermogenes sent a report to Justinian, who in turn sent Constantiolus to investigate.<sup>404</sup> This resulted in the recall of Belisarius as *magister militum per Orientem* and his replacement by Mundus.<sup>405</sup> This means that the *magister's* performance had left much to be desired, just as said by Malalas, not Procopius. The sequel also validates Malalas on the other main character, Arethas. Instead of being dismissed like Belisarius, which he would have been had he been a traitor, he was retained in the service and, what is more, entrusted with the military operation around Martyropolis, after Callinicum, where he fought with Sittas, *magister militum per Armeniam*.<sup>406</sup> This is a sure indication that Constantiolus' investigations had left his loyalty to Byzantium untarnished and had revealed that his stand on the right wing, even while three other groups were fleeing, earned the respect and gratitude of his overlords.

A return to the *prodosia* charge is now necessary since it was not only trumpeted by Procopius but also touched upon by Malalas, the reliable guide to the battle of Callinicum. It has been noted earlier that Malalas carefully distinguished two groups of Arabs, those who stood with Arethas and hence are exculpated from the charge of treachery, and those who fled with the Phrygians. So his statement on the subject is worth intensive treatment.

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manders. According to Rubin, this was because they were already named as the cavalry commanders at Daras (*Zeitalter Justinians*, 500 note 882, para. 2). I think their omission was rather studied, as part of Procopius' art in expressing his *studium* for Belisarius and *ira* against Arethas. By leaving out those other names he thrusts Arethas into prominence, the better to focus attention on the two figures of hero and villain, Belisarius and Arethas.

<sup>403</sup> "Procopius and Arethas," 45 note 13. "Kindlich" is Rubin's word. On the recent rehabilitation of Malalas, see below, 168–71.

<sup>404</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 465, lines 12–14.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466, lines 13–18. On Procopius' handling of this see below, 142.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*

It was while speaking of those who fled after the Phrygians took to flight that he says:<sup>407</sup> ὑπέλαβον δέ τινες ὅτι κατὰ προδοσίαν τῶν φυλάρχων αὐτῶν δέδωκεν νῶτα φανεροὶ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν. "Some supposed that a number of the Saracens fled because of the treachery of the phylarchs." It has been argued earlier that the charge of *prodosia* is incomprehensible when it is understood to have Byzantium as its target, but that if it obtained, most probably it involved the non-Ghassānid phylarchs and their attitude toward Arethas. The statement in Malalas is precise and carefully worded. It says that "some" (τινες), not all, supposed or suspected *prodosia* and that only "a number" fled, which is different from the statement in Procopius, which states that *all* fled and acquired the reputation of having betrayed the Romans. Malalas had no axe to grind, hence his statement that there was suspicion of treachery on the part of "some" must be accepted.<sup>408</sup> The task now is to explain the genesis of the *prodosia* charge in the minds of the few or those who did suspect. For resolving this problem two observations may be made.

a. It is not difficult to see how the thought of treachery could have crossed the minds of some who contemplated the course of the battle after it was over. The Persian Arabs, the Lakhmids, were at the left wing and opposed the Byzantine Arabs stationed on the right. So Arabs faced Arabs; the Lakhmids mounted a concentrated charge against the Byzantine Arabs and split their ranks in two; one part stayed fighting with Arethas, while the other took flight. So questions naturally arose in the minds of those who tried to explain the defeat involving the Arabs, and it is not difficult to see how treachery was the easiest explanation for the otherwise incomprehensible conduct of the fleeing Arabs.

b. It is tantalizing to think that Mundir intentionally had himself placed on the left wing and that he did so because he was aware of the effect of the recent *Basileia* of Arethas on his non-Ghassānid followers.<sup>409</sup> His spies would have explained to him the potential friction and tension in the Byzantine federate camp.<sup>410</sup> If so, then his plan succeeded beautifully; the impetuosity of his charge split the Arab federate army in two—the Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid—and gave the latter ample opportunity to think of themselves and their safety rather than risk their lives fighting for the Ghassānid phylarch.

Perhaps the foregoing has satisfactorily explained the genesis of the charge of treachery leveled against the Arabs. Evidently it was unfounded as a

<sup>407</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), p. 464, lines 6–7.

<sup>408</sup> Note Malalas' carefully worded sentence, implying that he was only quoting, not vouching for the truth of the accusation; it was a rumor, of which he was not convinced.

<sup>409</sup> He probably had an additional reason for wanting to confront his Ghassānid counterpart. In 528 the latter had humiliated him by appearing in his courtyard in revenge for Arethas the Kindite (above, 70–71). Mundir tried to retaliate the following year (529) but apparently did not establish contact; this was, then, his first occasion to do so.

<sup>410</sup> For Lakhmid spies see Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.35; for Ghassānid, see *BASIC* II.

treachery directed against Byzantium.<sup>411</sup> This is clear from the investigations of Constantiolus, which did not result in cashiering any of the Arab *foederati* or terminating their service. They appear with Arethas shortly after, fighting the wars of Byzantium around Martyropolis.

Procopius exploited the suspicion of *prodosia* that was in the air after the battle, and so manipulated it in his attempt to act as *praeco* for Belisarius at the expense of Arethas and the Arabs. So that his account might carry conviction, he employed all his art in order to convince the reader of the truth of what he said. What is more, he suppressed all reference to the investigations of Constantiolus and to the new *magister militum*, Mundus, who appears in his *History* as a *stratēgos* in Illyricum and helps in quelling the Nika revolt.<sup>412</sup> He also omitted all references to Arethas, including the fact that he did not share the fate of Belisarius but was retained in Oriens.

#### The Sequel to Callinicum

The Arabs were involved in two events following the battle of Callinicum: in the operations around Martyropolis later in the year and in the negotiations before the conclusion of the Endless Peace in 532. Malalas records that shortly after Callinicum the Persians mounted a military operation against Byzantine Osrhoene in which their Arabs were involved.<sup>413</sup> Presumably the Lakhmids under their king Mundir took part in it. More important are the operations recorded by Procopius centering around Martyropolis in Mesopotamia.<sup>414</sup> As far as the Arabs are concerned, it is not Procopius but Zacharia who is informative, providing the information that Arethas took part, fighting with the distinguished general Sittas.<sup>415</sup> This fact is also relevant to Procopius' prejudiced account of the Arab role at Callinicum, in which he vilified Arethas and glorified Belisarius. As the sequel to the battle did not bear him out, he suppressed the fact that while Belisarius was dismissed, Arethas was not only retained but asked to take part in the next campaign that year.

In June 531 the Lakhmid king Mundir initiated negotiations between the Persians and the Byzantines through a deacon named Sergius who lived in Byzantine territory. The deacon was sent to Mundir and returned to Byzantium with a letter from Mundir to Justinian; the latter found it unacceptable and responded to Kawad in a threatening manner. At the same time Sergius

<sup>411</sup> It is impossible to believe that the Salihids would have conspired with Mundir against the Ghassanids; they were as zealous Christians as the latter, and had fought the Lakhmids in the 5th century.

<sup>412</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xx.2. On Mundus, see Bury, *HLRE*, II, 87–88; Stein, *HBE*, II, 293.

<sup>413</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 465.

<sup>414</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xxi.4–28.

<sup>415</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, p. 67, lines 25–27, referring to him by his patronymic, Bar-Jabala.

was sent back to the Lakhmid king with imperial gifts from Justinian.<sup>416</sup> Malalas is our only source for this diplomatic transaction, which reflects the importance of ecclesiastics in conducting negotiations with the Arabs, as is also known from the missions of Abraham, the father of Nonnosus, to Qays the Kindite in central Arabia, and earlier in the 520s to Mundir himself.<sup>417</sup> The ecclesiastic here is referred to as a deacon. It is, however, unlikely that such an important mission would have been conducted by a cleric of such low rank. More likely he was a bishop, in fact Sergius, the bishop of Ruṣāfa/Sergiopolis, who had taken part with Abraham in the Ramla conference for the release of the captured Roman dukes, John and Timostratus.<sup>418</sup> This transaction also demonstrated that the Lakhmid king was a great asset to the Persian king in peace as well as war. Kawad was growing old, and was to die shortly after while the Byzantines were preparing to invade Persian territory. He found it more convenient and face-saving to initiate peace negotiations not himself but through his vassal Mundir.

The fact that Justinian sent Sergius back with gifts to Mundir while threatening Kawad reflects Byzantium's desire to negotiate separately with Mundir and lure him away from Persia—clearly a vain hope.<sup>419</sup> This also confirms Chosroes' accusations against Justinian in 539 during the *Strata* dispute, that the latter had tried to win Mundir over to his side.<sup>420</sup> The diplomatic episode also testifies to Mundir's importance in the course of the Persian war, especially the Callinicum campaign. He had conceived the battle's strategy and played a decisive role in tactics when he charged and split the Byzantine right wing, thus contributing decisively to the Byzantine rout. He now conducted the initial negotiations for peace, which was finally concluded in the following year.

#### The Endless Peace, 532

In a well-known passage,<sup>421</sup> Malalas describes the Byzantine-Persian war that was concluded in 532 as having lasted for thirty-one years. In the same passage he refers to the events that constituted the initial phase of this long war, which began in the reign of Anastasius including the "local wars with the Saracens."<sup>422</sup> The passage has attracted the attention of the historians of the

<sup>416</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 466–67. Cf. Stein, *HBE*, II, 294, and Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 290. Mundir's letter to Justinian raises the question of what language he used in order to communicate with the emperor.

<sup>417</sup> See the present writer in "The Conference of Ramla," *JNES* 23 (1964), 115–31.

<sup>418</sup> For Bishop Sergius see *ibid.*, 116, 121.

<sup>419</sup> Well pointed out by Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 290.

<sup>420</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.12–13.

<sup>421</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 477–78.

<sup>422</sup> Τοὺς μερικoὺς πολέμους τῶν Σαρακηνῶν ἐπιδρομῶν; *ibid.*, p. 478, lines 6–7.



reign of Justinian, especially Malalas' reference to the war as having lasted thirty-one years.<sup>423</sup> The elucidation of the role of the Arabs in the Persian-Byzantine conflict, undertaken in this volume, may contribute to a better understanding of this paragraph. In addition to the remarks made earlier (see Chapter II above), the following observations may be made.

1. In spite of the description of the wars with the Saracens as τὸς μερικῶς πολέμους, "local or sectional wars," Malalas clearly conceived of them as an integral part of the Byzantine-Persian conflict during the reign of three emperors.

2. His inclusion of these wars among the events of the war during the reign of Anastasius suggests that he considered them an important element in the history of the conflict during that reign. The discussion of the Arab war effort during the reign of Anastasius, undertaken earlier,<sup>424</sup> has brought out the importance of these wars and has thus made the statement in Malalas more intelligible.

3. The claim that the war lasted for thirty-one years sounds less startling now that the role of the Arabs during the three reigns has been elucidated. Especially relevant is the Arab involvement in the war during the reign of Justin I,<sup>425</sup> which suggests that the war began at the inception of his reign—in 519, not 527.

## XII. THE EMBASSY OF JULIAN

Around 530<sup>426</sup> Justinian dispatched his *agens in rebus*, Julian, to the Southern Semites—the Ethiopians and the Ḥimyarites—in order to win them over to a military alliance against Persia. Julian's mission was extremely complex, with four elements to it, involving the Ethiopians, the Ḥimyarites, the Kindites, and the Ma'addite Arabs. It encompassed both the world of Arabia and the Red Sea. Accounts of this embassy in the surviving sources, especially when taken together with the embassy of Nonnosus, have proved most perplexing to scholars.<sup>427</sup> Most of the difficulties can be resolved by the aid of the Semitic sources, Arabic and Sabaic, and by showing that the embassy of Nonnosus was part of that of Julian.<sup>428</sup>

The two principal sources for the embassy of Julian are Procopius and

<sup>423</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 79 note 1; Stein, *HBE*, II, 101 note 3.

<sup>424</sup> See above, 12–19.

<sup>425</sup> See above, 42–48.

<sup>426</sup> The date is either 530 (so Malalas, followed by Stein) or 531 (so Procopius, followed by Bury).

<sup>427</sup> Stein, *HBE*, II, 299: "mais il ne nous est pas possible de pénétrer entièrement ce jeu politique." This and Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1198, are vitiated by their identification of Qays with the poet Imru' al-Qays.

<sup>428</sup> See "Byzantium and Kinda," 63–66.



Malalas,<sup>429</sup> who complement each other. In spite of the *Kaiserkritik*<sup>430</sup> that pervades his account of the embassy, Procopius is valuable especially for the part played by the Arabs—Kindites and Ma'addites—in the negotiations conducted by Julian.

The military alliance that Julian forged with the Southern Semites may be most clearly described as hierarchical and quadripartite in structure. Supreme in this alliance was Ethiopia, which during the reign of Justin had conquered Ḥimyar in South Arabia. Ḥimyar in turn was the foremost power in the Arabian Peninsula, and Kinda was in a client relationship to Ḥimyar, which enabled it to rule Ma'add. Hence the importance of the Negus of Ethiopia for setting in motion the series of military operations involving the other three peoples. In these operations, the Arabs—Kindites and Ma'addites—were the "mailed fist" of the Ethiopians and the Ḥimyarites, since they were the closest to the Persians and their clients the Lakhmids. Julian urged the alliance on the grounds of both community of religion and self-interest for the parties involved, especially the Ethiopians. What was contemplated was an expedition against the Persians from their left or southern flank in order to relieve the pressure on the Byzantine front in Oriens. The details in the accounts of the embassy need to be commented upon as they relate to Ethiopia, Ḥimyar, Kinda, and Ma'add, the four participants in the alliance.

### Ethiopia

1. From Malalas' account it is clear that the principal target of the embassy was the Negus of Ethiopia. Malalas preserves a colorful and detailed account of Justinian's message to him, the reception Julian had at Axum, the reaction of the Negus, a description of the court, and the conclusion of the alliance against Persia.<sup>431</sup> The Negus was happy to oblige the emperor and conclude the alliance, reflecting the desire of the states of the Christian Orient to have the flattering Byzantine connection.<sup>432</sup> Justinian could count on the assistance he had extended to the Negus in the war with Ḥimyar by providing him with a fleet to transport his expeditionary force across the Red Sea to South Arabia.<sup>433</sup> Years later the Negus clearly remembered this favor, and thus Justinian reaped what he had sown during his uncle Justin's reign.

2. Justinian's appeal to the Negus was on two grounds: community of religion, as Christians warring against the fire-worshipping Persians; and self-

<sup>429</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xx.9–12; Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 456–59. Theophanes duplicates Malalas, adding only the name of the ambassador, Julian; *Chronographia*, 244–45.

<sup>430</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 373–75 on the *Kaiserkritik* context here.

<sup>431</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 456–59.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458, line 5–p. 459, line 3.

<sup>433</sup> On the Byzantine fleet, see "Conference of Ramla," 129 note 52.

interest in engaging in commerce directly with India and the Far East rather than leaving it in the hands of Persian middlemen.<sup>434</sup> Procopius gives the impression that this did not succeed because the Persians were strategically located to frustrate this scheme. However, this may be a reflection of his *Kaiserkritik*; and the attestation of Ethiopian ships in the Persian Gulf<sup>435</sup> and Ethiopian merchants in Ceylon<sup>436</sup> in the sixth century suggests that the Ethiopians had some success in trading directly with India.

3. Unlike Procopius, Malalas, who had no axe to grind, witnesses to the success of the diplomatic mission at Axum. He explicitly states that the Negus immediately accepted the offer of the alliance, declaring war on the Persians and setting in motion a complicated military operation against them, in which the Arabs of the Peninsula played an important role. Malalas' account must be the correct one, since it is supported by evidence from contemporary pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.<sup>437</sup>

### Ḥimyar

The involvement of the Arabs in the operation against Persia was to be effected through the Ḥimyarites in South Arabia. As Ethiopia was an African power distant from the Persian border, implementation of the plan against Persia could be done through an Asiatic power in the Arabian Peninsula—Ḥimyar—which moreover was both a vassal of Ethiopia and lord over the Arab Ma'add. Justinian could count on a friendly Ḥimyar since he had supported the Negus in conquering South Arabia and converting it to Christianity. Ḥimyar had come a long way since the days of Justin I's contemporary Yūsuf, the anti-Christian Ḥimyarite king, who not only harassed Roman merchants but also tried to ally himself with Lakhmid Muḥdir and the Persian king Kawad against Byzantium.<sup>438</sup> Christian Ḥimyar would also benefit from the establishment of direct trade relations with India since trade would pass through it instead of Persia, and thence to Ethiopia and via the Nile to Alexandria.

### The Arabs: Ma'add and Kinda

Fundamental for the success of the plan against Persia were the Arabs of the Peninsula, professional warriors close to the Persian and Lakhmid borders. At the same time, they were the weakest point of the alliance: as Procopius explained, the chief of Kinda, Qays, had killed a relative of the Ḥimyarite

<sup>434</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xx.9.

<sup>435</sup> See G. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring* (Princeton, 1951), 3, 42.

<sup>436</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chrétienne*, ed. and trans. W. Wolska-Conus, SC 197 (Paris, 1968-73), III, p. 345, lines 1-3.

<sup>437</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>438</sup> See "Conference of Ramla," 123-28.

king, and, according to the Arabic sources, Ma'add had rebelled against the authority of Kinda.<sup>439</sup> But Byzantine diplomacy had negotiated this difficulty and apparently installed Qays over Ma'add again; thus the Arabs could fight the Persians and their clients the Lakhmids.

1. The implication of Procopius' statement that the Himyarite king was to install the homicide Qays over Ma'add was that Ma'add had rebelled against Kinda. This accords with what the Arabic sources say about the rebellion of Ma'add against Kinda after the death of Arethas the Kindite in 528. That Himyar had the authority to install Qays over Ma'add is confirmed by Procopius' statement, in his ethnographic digression on Arabia and the Red Sea, that Ma'add was subject to the Himyarites.<sup>440</sup>

2. Kinda and Qays. Apparently Esimiphæus, the king of Himyar, was able to forget about the murder of his relative and install Qays over Ma'add because of his special relationship with the Negus, who had done him a great service after the Ethiopian conquest of South Arabia by installing him as king of Himyar. Malalas' statement on the inception of the military operation against Persia involves the Arabs: thus evidently Julian was successful in persuading Esimiphæus to forget the past and put Qays in command of Ma'add. This is well confirmed by the campaign that Qays then waged against the Persians by attacking their client-king Mundir the Lakhmid, a campaign attested by good Arabic sources. First there is the reliable *Geographical Dictionary* of Yaqūt, according to which Qays warred against Mundir and forced him to retreat to his castle of al-Khawarnaq.<sup>441</sup> Second, there is a passage in one of the "Suspended Odes" of pre-Islamic Arabia describing the military action of Qays at the head of Ma'add, which rallied round him against Mundir.<sup>442</sup> This passage confirms the reports of Nonnosus and Procopius on Qays' reinstallation over Ma'add, which he then led against Mundir. Thus the Arabic sources flatly contradict what Procopius says on the failure of Julian's embassy, that it resulted in unfulfillable promises. They also confirm what Malalas says on the instant declaration of war by the Negus and the dispatch of Arab troops, the "Indian Saracens," against the Persians. That further military operations were not conducted is a measure neither of the loyalty of

<sup>439</sup> On the homicide see Procopius, *History*, I.xx.10. On the rebellion of the tribe of Asad against Hujr son of Arethas, see Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 77; and for the internecine wars among Arethas' sons after his death see *ibid.*, 70-93. All this explains the need for Nonnosus' special embassy.

<sup>440</sup> *History*, I.xix.14, confirmed by the Arabic sources according to which the South Arabian kings put the Kindites in command of Ma'add; see Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1956), II, 569.

<sup>441</sup> First noted by Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 117.

<sup>442</sup> See below, 164-65. The passage is further reinforced by the fact that Qays' father had ruled the Ma'add tribes Taghlib and al-Namir, tribes in northeastern Arabia close to the Lakhmids; Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 74.

Justinian's allies nor of the value of the alliance. The Persian king Kawad died shortly afterward, in September 531, and both empires undertook negotiations to end the war, which culminated in the conclusion of the Endless Peace in the spring of 532.

Julian's embassy was thus a great success and a reflection of Justinian's mature foreign policy toward the Semitic Orient.<sup>443</sup> Through his *agens in rebus* he was able to enlist the world of the Red Sea and Arabia in the service of the Christian empire, and in this endeavor his Arab *foederati* the Kindites were indispensable. Kinda controlled Arab manpower in the Peninsula outside the *limes* for him; hence it was more in the Peninsula than in Oriens that Kinda operated as Byzantium's ally.<sup>444</sup> For Oriens the Ghassānids were the principal *foederati*, and they acquitted themselves well in containing Muḍir and fighting the Persians, while they were also important for Byzantine policy in the Peninsula too, especially in western Arabia with influential colonies of Azdites to whom Ghassān belonged. After the death of Arethas the Kindite and the decline of Kinda's power, Ghassān apparently inherited some of Kinda's control over the tribes of the Peninsula.

In the conduct of diplomacy with the Arabs and the world of the Southern Semites in general, Justinian had at his disposal professional *agentes in rebus*, seasoned in the service of the empire in those distant regions. Three generations of the family of Nonnosus served three emperors—Justinian, Justin I, and Anastasius—with distinction. In addition to this family, there was Julian (the brother of Summus, the well-known *dux* of Palestine), who probably carried out two missions to the Southern Semites for Justinian.<sup>445</sup> These triumphs of Byzantine diplomacy were, however, obscured by the chief historian of the reign, whose account of Julian's embassy is pure *Kaiserkritik* and who was not well-disposed toward Julian either.<sup>446</sup> He also omitted the family of Nonnosus from his *History* and, in so doing, ignored their diplomatic successes with the Arabs of the Peninsula.

### XIII. BYZANTIUM AND KINDA

The Greek sources for the period of the first Persian war of Justinian's reign are unusually informative on federate Kinda, even more than on the principal group, Ghassān. There is Malalas' account of the fortunes of the Kindite chief Arethas and his death in 528. There is also Nonnosus' account of Arethas' successors, especially Qays, with whom Byzantium had to deal. Hence the

<sup>443</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 375–80.

<sup>444</sup> Although it had some federate presence in Oriens too.

<sup>445</sup> He probably represented Justinian again at the South Arabian court of Abraha; see BASIC II.

<sup>446</sup> See the passage on the *Strata* dispute, Procopius, *History*, II.i.9–11, and a historiographic analysis in "Procopius and Arethas," 371–72.

discussion of Kindite-Byzantine relations in this period will turn largely on these two figures, Arethas and Qays.

#### Arethas

Malalas' account deals not only with Arethas the Kindite but also with the Ghassānid punitive expedition that Byzantium sent to avenge his death at the hands of Munḍir the Lakhmid. Since the Ghassānid profile of this account has been analyzed earlier,<sup>447</sup> the present treatment will concentrate on the Kindite.

Malalas' passage reads: "In that year, it happened that enmity developed between the *dux* of Palestine Diomedes, *silentiarius*, and the phylarch Arethas. Arethas took flight and went to the inner *limes* towards India. On learning this, Alamoundaros, the Persian Saracen, attacked the Roman phylarch, captured him and killed him, for he had 30,000 men with him."<sup>448</sup> This precise passage raises a number of questions about Byzantine-Kindite relations.

1. The last mention of Arethas was in Theophanes, with regard to the *foedus* with Byzantium in 502. For almost a quarter of a century this powerful chief of Kinda disappears from the Greek sources and the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations<sup>449</sup> until he is picked up by Malalas under 528. However, the Arabic sources<sup>450</sup> have much to tell about him, although the data they provide are only indirectly related to his Byzantine connection. In this quarter century Arethas must have consolidated his already strong position in Inner Arabia, armed now with the prestige of a *foedus* with Byzantium. That the turbulent tribes of Inner Arabia were now controlled by a federate of Byzantium was a matter of importance for the empire's Arabian policy.<sup>451</sup> Also, in addition to his power in Arabia, Arethas became the master of Ḥīra, the Lakhmid capital, for some years. This Kindite interregnum in Ḥīra has been variously dated, to the 520s by the present study.<sup>452</sup> The Malalas passage considered here supports this view. The sudden appearance of the Kindite chief as the phylarch of a province in Oriens, Palestine, after having been the king of Ḥīra and Inner Arabia, suggests that this was an arrangement hastily worked out to accommodate a chief who had fled and taken refuge in Oriens. Arethas' flight from Ḥīra after Munḍir's return suggests an immediate background for his phylarchate over Palestine late in the 520s. Furthermore, the fact that it was Munḍir who pursued and killed him after he quarreled with

<sup>447</sup> For the Ghassānid profile see above, 70–75.

<sup>448</sup> Malalas, *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffreys et al., 252; for the Greek see *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 434–35.

<sup>449</sup> Including the reign of Justin I which saw Munḍir's raids.

<sup>450</sup> Discussed by Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 51–69.

<sup>451</sup> Cf. above, 146–48.

<sup>452</sup> See above, 41, 46.

the *dux* of Palestine, Diomedes, suggests animosity on Mundir's part, explicable by Arethas' interregnum in Mundir's own capital. Such a violent reaction of Mundir suggests that the Hīra episode had been recent, rather than at the turn of the century.

2. Malalas does not report how and where the fugitive Kindite king was accommodated in Palestine. It is possible that the Ghassānids, who enjoyed good relations with the Kindites and with whom they intermarried, contributed to the return of the Kindite chief and his being endowed with the phylarchate of Palestine.<sup>453</sup> The enmity between him and Diomedes was not unnatural; friction between federate and imperial leaders also occurred later in the century, as in the cases of the Ghassānids Mundir and Nu'mān. In that of Arethas, who was no young and obscure phylarch, it was more understandable, making conflict with the Byzantine *dux* hard to avoid. Arethas had been a great figure in Arabian and Hīran history; now, after the collapse of his Sasanid connection, he was a refugee,<sup>454</sup> who had to accept a modest phylarchate over a Byzantine province. Embittered and irascible, he could easily quarrel with the *dux* of the province, being unused to accountability.<sup>455</sup> Which of the three Palestines he was phylarch of is not clear, but the likelihood is that it was Tertia.

3. His flight must also have entailed the retreat of his Kindite troops and their withdrawal from his phylarchate of Palestine.<sup>456</sup> Thus technically the *foedus* between Kinda and Byzantium was temporarily broken in 528. Important in Malalas' account is the fact that, after his quarrel with Diomedes, Arethas went to the inner *limes*, toward "India": εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ ἐνδότερον λίμνον, ἐπὶ τὰ Ἰνδικά. In specifying where Arethas fled, Malalas used the vocabulary of the Roman frontier. The "inner *limes*" he spoke of has attracted the attention of frontier scholars, who have tried to understand the concept of the double line of defense in the East represented by Malalas' terms "inner" and "outer *limes*," which get reversed by Theophanes for whom what had been "outer" in Malalas became "inner," and vice versa. In the most recent discussion of this concept, it was argued that Malalas' formulation is accurate and that Theophanes, writing in the Middle Byzantine period, actually misun-

<sup>453</sup> See above, 69.

<sup>454</sup> Other Arab chiefs had disagreed with their Persian overlords and then taken the same path, e.g., Imru' al-Qays in the 4th century, and Aspebetos and Amorkesos in the 5th.

<sup>455</sup> Apart from the Malalas reference, nothing else is known about Diomedes, *dux* of Palestine. He may have been mindful of his predecessor *dux* Romanus' defeat of both the Kindites and the Ghassānids (above, 21), but how this could make a precedent is not clear. As the Arabic sources attest Arethas' bravery, his "fright" is surprising; perhaps he was growing old, with the power and prestige of Byzantium backing the *dux*. Malalas does not apportion blame; if the *dux* was at fault, this reinforces the impression that a *foedus* between Byzantium and a client-king was always a *foedus iniquum*.

<sup>456</sup> As Mundir the Ghassānid was to do later in the century; see below, 356–64.



derstood Malalas.<sup>457</sup> The conclusion of that study is that *limes* meant "frontier" and not a zone or territory, and "inner *limes*" meant "an inner frontier that was the farthest removed from settled habitations and an outer frontier . . . was closer to the oikoumenē, the settled or developed territory."<sup>458</sup>

Whatever the exact meaning of these terms as far as Arethas the Kindite's flight is concerned, there can be little doubt as to the region to which he fled. Arethas was the phylarch of Palestine, probably of Tertia. A phylarch fleeing from a Roman provincial *dux* could not have fled into another Roman province, such as Arabia or Phoenicia, since he would have been anxious to avoid the attention of another representative of Roman authority. He must have marched from Roman soil in Palaestina Tertia directly into Arabian territory, the closest being Ḥijāz, which he must have reached directly from the southern boundary of Tertia and not from Wādī Sirḥān, as the latter would have required passing through the Provincia Arabia. One should also take Kinda's relations with Persia and its Lakhmids into account: he could not have fled into regions close to Persian and Lakhmid territory<sup>459</sup> because he had quarreled with both lord and vassal in those regions, while his flight into Ḥijāz fits with the fact that the large tribal confederation called Ma'add, over which his sons ruled, were at least partly settled there. This is confirmed by Procopius' ethnographic digression on western Arabia, where he locates the Maddenoī between the Homeritae of South Arabia and the Saracens of Phoinikōn in northern Ḥijāz.<sup>460</sup> We are not sure as to just where Muṇḍir found and killed Arethas: the encounter could have taken place in either Ḥijāz or Najd, where Kinda was also influential, and where Arethas could have gone after reestablishing contact with his Arab allies and subjects in Ḥijāz.

4. The Kindite king remained controversial even after his death, especially over the question of who in fact killed him.<sup>461</sup> Besides Muṇḍir, the tribe of Kalb maintained that he was killed by one of them,<sup>462</sup> while a tradition

<sup>457</sup> See P. Mayerson, "A Note on the Roman *Limes*: 'Inner' vs. 'Outer'," *Israel Exploration Journal* 38 (1988), 181–83; B. Isaac, "The Meaning of the Terms 'Limes' and 'Limitanei,'" *JRS* 78 (1988), 125–47. Mayerson's study relates the terms to Arethas the Kindite and Muṇḍir the Lakhmid, while Isaac's does not. For earlier discussions of the two *limites*, see Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 490 note 815, 492 note 820. See *BASIC II*, "Frontier Studies."

<sup>458</sup> Mayerson, "Note on the Roman *Limes*," 181.

<sup>459</sup> Malalas' phrase ἐπὶ τῷ Ἰνδικῷ reflects the vagueness of the term *Indika* at this time; it could mean Arabia and the Red Sea region. Here it excludes India proper and the regions close to Persia.

<sup>460</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xix.14.

<sup>461</sup> For Arabic traditions on Arethas' death see Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 68.

<sup>462</sup> Nöldeke, who usually followed Greek sources first, accepted this (*GF*, 11 note 2), influenced by a poem written by a Kalbite mentioning "Ḥārith" (Arethas) as having been killed by the tribe of Kalb. This poem, however, comes from the Kalbite tradition that made this account a matter of bragging, not historical truth; and it is addressed to a Ghassānid prince, Ḥārith son of Māriya. The poem is comminatory, praising the prowess of the poet's own tribe



going back to Kinda itself maintains that he died a natural death. However, neither Arabic tradition warrants belief, since the case for Muḍīr as the killer is very strong. For a pre-Islamic event such as this, the contemporary Greek sources are to be followed, in this case Malalas who, presumably following a primary source or official document, states that Muḍīr killed Arethas. Furthermore, immediately after his death Byzantium sent out an expedition to avenge it: if he had been killed by some obscure tribesman in the Arabian Peninsula, Byzantium would not have reacted in that fashion. It did so because Arethas, its erstwhile ally, had been killed by its archenemy, the Lakhmid Muḍīr. To have left his death unavenged would have sent a message to the Arabs of the Peninsula that Muḍīr had scored a victory over Byzantium's ally and hence indirectly against Byzantium itself. There is also further confirmation from the celebrated Hind inscription in Ḥīra. Set up by the wife of the Lakhmid Muḍīr, who was the daughter of Arethas the Kindite, during the reign of her son the Lakhmid king ʿAmr ibn-Hind (554–559), the inscription mentions Hind, her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, all Kindites, and her son ʿAmr, but pointedly omits her husband, Muḍīr. Hind must have been so embittered by her husband's killing of her father that she omitted mentioning him.<sup>463</sup>

5. The expeditionary force dispatched by Byzantium was the best measure of the importance of Arethas the Kindite in Byzantium's scheme of things.<sup>464</sup> Technically, Arethas had broken the *foedus* with Byzantium in 528 when he quarreled with Diomedes and withdrew his troops from Byzantium's service. Yet Byzantium quickly mounted an impressive force to avenge his death, since its prestige in Arabia was at stake. The deceased phylarch had been Byzantium's ally since 502 and was the dominant power in central Arabia. As such an ally, his dominance meant indirect Byzantine influence in Arabia. Thus his death, especially as a rebel, would have imperiled Byzantium's position in Arabia, leaving the Peninsular Arabs to draw the conclusion that his defection and death meant the end of Byzantine influence in the Peninsula. Hence Byzantium could not stand aloof and had to assert its presence in Arabia, as reflected in how deeply the expedition penetrated, even as far as Persian territory. This let the Arabs and the Persians together with their Lakhmid allies know that Arethas the Kindite's death did not mean the retreat of Byzantine power.

Arethas' death had far-reaching consequences. In Oriens it further enhanced the Ghassānids' position, stronger than Kinda's as far back as the

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and threatening the Ghassānid; it even boasts that Kalb had also killed a Kindite king before (see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 82–83, esp. 83 with note 2).

<sup>463</sup> See Rothstein, *DLH*, 24.

<sup>464</sup> For the Ghassānid profile of this expedition, see above, 70–75.

treaty of 502. Now with the broken treaty and Arethas' defection and death, Ghassān emerged even stronger as the principal federate group in Oriens, a position yet further enhanced by Arethas the Ghassānid's promotion to the extraordinary *Basileia* in 529. Also for Muṇḍir the Lakhmid this was a wind-fall, further increasing his power. When Arethas was expelled from Ḥīra, Muṇḍir fell heir to his dominion, which, according to the Kindite poet Imru' al-Qays, extended as far as Oman in eastern Arabia.<sup>465</sup> Muṇḍir stepped in to fill some of the political vacuum created by Arethas' death. The Arabic sources speak of Chosroes Anūshravān's extension of Muṇḍir's power in vast areas of the Peninsula, including Ḥijāz.<sup>466</sup> If true, this would have happened shortly after Arethas' death in 528, during the reign of Kawad (d. 531), not Chosroes.<sup>467</sup> Though the precise area is hard to identify, in general Muṇḍir emerged as a power in central Arabia, as we see from his wars with the two South Arabian kings<sup>468</sup> and with Byzantium.

6. Arethas' death had the farthest-reaching effect on Kinda itself.<sup>469</sup> The house of Ākil al-Murār, to which he had belonged, was now on the wane, and according to the Arabic sources even began to return to their place of origin in Ḥaḍramawt, in South Arabia.<sup>470</sup> Other clans from Kinda begin to appear at this time, some being attested in the sources as the lords of Dūmat at the southern tip of Wādī Sirḥān, where they appear as allies of Byzantium fighting against the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century.<sup>471</sup> As to the immediate family of Arethas, its immediate representative became Qays, who received two embassies from Byzantium with a view to restoring damaged Kindite-Byzantine relations.

### Qays

Almost immediately after the return of the punitive expedition against Muṇḍir, Byzantium engaged in a series of diplomatic activities involving

<sup>465</sup> Expressed in a verse by the Kindite poet Imru' al-Qays; see *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1958), 143.

<sup>466</sup> As in Ṭabarī, for whom see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 238. Although Nöldeke doubted the statement, other scholars have accepted the extension of Muṇḍir's power in Arabia. See M. J. Kister, "Al-Ḥīra: Some Notes on Its Relations with Arabia," *Arabica* 15 (1968), 144–49. John of Nikiu calls Muṇḍir "King of Ḥijāz" (*Chronicle*, trans. Charles), 142.

<sup>467</sup> Unless it took place somewhat after Arethas' death, early in Chosroes' reign.

<sup>468</sup> For epigraphic evidence see *BASIC* II.

<sup>469</sup> Disastrous were both Arethas' death and the division of Ma'add among his sons: the tribe of Asad killed his son Ḥujr; another son, Shuraḥbīl, died in a civil war with his brother Salama, who became paralyzed. See Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 74, 77–82, 82–85, 92; Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, ed. I. Lichtenstädter (Hyderabad, 1942), 370 for Salama's fate.

<sup>470</sup> See J. 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fi Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām* (Beirut, 1969), 357; and the present writer in *El<sup>2</sup>*, s.v. "Kinda."

<sup>471</sup> For the defense of Dūmat against the Muslims by Kindites of the clan of al-Sakūn, see Balāḍuri, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, 1956), I, 73–75.

Kinda that went through three distinct stages. Fortunately they were recorded in what must have been a monograph on Byzantine-Kindite relations in the sixth century. Byzantine diplomacy with Kinda after the death of Arethas was conducted by two members of the same family, Abraham and his son Nonnosus, who wrote the history of their deeds.<sup>472</sup> Nonnosus' account was preserved in an epitome made by Patriarch Photius, which unfortunately contains no dates or toponyms as far as Qays is concerned;<sup>473</sup> even the context of the Byzantine diplomatic mission is not explained. However, Procopius, Malalas, and the Arabic sources can help solve most of these problems, the latter supplying details not found in the Greek. The first Persian war of Justinian's reign is the background against which to set the phases of Byzantium's diplomatic relations with Kinda. The first phase was conducted by Abraham, the second by Nonnosus, and the third again by Abraham; all three were directed at Qays, who after Arethas' death appears as the chief *sayyid* of Kinda.<sup>474</sup>

The Qays of Nonnosus has been identified<sup>475</sup> with the grandson of Arethas through his son Salama,<sup>476</sup> an identification made sixty-five years ago and supported by subsequent research in the history of Kinda. That Qays was the dominant personality in Kindite history after the death of his grandfather Arethas is clearly reflected in the fact that Byzantium sent him all of three embassies, as we find confirmed in the Arabic sources. He was considered a *jarrār*, the commander of a thousand warriors (chiliarch), and is described in flattering, warlike terms in one of the Suspended Odes of pre-Islamic Arabia.<sup>477</sup>

<sup>472</sup> This account of Byzantine-Kindite relations was by fortunate chance included in Photius' *Bibliotheca*, perhaps thanks to Photius' having served as ambassador to the "Assyrians" (i.e., Arabs); see W. Treadgold, *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius*, DOS 18 (Washington, D.C., 1980), 16, 25–26, 34–35. The original, presumably detailed, treatise would have preserved valuable data; probably similar treatises on Byzantium's relations with Arab groups were written but have not survived. For the text of Nonnosus see Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. R. Henry (Paris, 1959), I, 4–7.

<sup>473</sup> In the part dealing with Arabia, Nonnosus' account mentions only Phoinikōn and the Turenian Mountains, hard to identify; for the latter see *BASIC II*.

<sup>474</sup> See "Byzantium and Kinda," and "Procopius and Kinda," studies in part updated in the present work.

<sup>475</sup> Made by Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 116–17. For earlier scholarship and the erroneous identification of Nonnosus' Qays with the poet Imru' al-Qays, see the Appendix to "Byzantium and Kinda."

<sup>476</sup> Salama, son of Arethas and father of Qays, was put by his father in charge of Taghlib, al-Namir, and part of Tamīm when the dominion of Kinda over Ma'add was divided. At the battle of al-Kulāb, Salama fought his brother Shuraḥbīl, who had been put in charge of Bakr, a part of Tamīm, and al-Ribāb. Shuraḥbīl was killed, while the victor Salama later became paralyzed, explaining why later Byzantium dealt not with him but with his son Qays, as we see from the epitome. Qays was Arethas' ἀπόγονος, grandson. See Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 370; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, 571–72; Olinder, *Kings of Kinda*, 74, 82–84 (cf. above, note 469).

<sup>477</sup> For the first description as *jarrār*, see Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 252; for the second see *Septem Mō'allaqat*, ed. F. Arnold (Leipzig, 1850), 181, not cited by Olinder: although he was

We may now analyze the three embassies and treat the problems they raise in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations.

#### The First Embassy of Abraham

Justinian sent Abraham, the father of Nonnosus, to negotiate with Qays. He succeeded in concluding a *foedus* with Qays and brought the latter's son Mu'āwiya to Constantinople as a hostage. Nonnosus' account gives only these bare facts, which deserve comment. First, the obvious background for the dispatch of the embassy<sup>478</sup> was the expedition against Mundir in April 528. This expedition must have mollified Qays, whose grandfather Arethas had been killed by Mundir. Where in Arabia Abraham met Qays is not preserved in the epitome (but must have been in the original text). Kinda is associated with Jabal 'Āqil in Najd and with Ḡhamr dī Kinda in Ḥijāz. The more likely meeting place is not the former—which would have been out of Abraham's way as he was going to Ḥimyar and Ethiopia—but the latter, or possibly Phoinikōn in Ḥijāz to which the epitome does refer, although not directly in relation to Qays.<sup>479</sup> The date of the embassy is also hard to fix, although we do have two termini: it was sent after April 528, the date of the anti-Mundir expedition, and probably before Arethas' *Basileia* in the latter part of 529. Byzantium would have found it easier to placate Qays before promoting a Ghassānid to that high position.

Abraham succeeded in renewing the *foedus* with Kinda through Qays, recalling the *foedus* of 502 concluded with his grandfather Arethas, that had been negotiated by Euphrasius, Nonnosus' grandfather. Arethas' flight and death had terminated the treaty, and its renewal in 528/29 kept up a quarter century of *amicitia* between the two powers. The only other achievement of Abraham mentioned by the epitome is the hostage-taking of Qays' son Mu'āwiya. This may imply that Byzantium wanted a guaranty for Qays' keeping the terms of the treaty, and is also consistent with the Byzantine diplomatic practice of bringing young barbarian princes to the capital to be brought up there as potential Byzantine allies. In coming to Constantinople, Mu'āwiya followed other Arabs who came as friends of Byzantium, from Amorkesos in the fifth century to his own father Qays a little later, and many Ghassānids in the sixth century.

The terms of the 528 *foedus* are not stated by the epitome, though they must have existed in Nonnosus' original. They probably repeated the terms of

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aware of the ode (*Kings of Kinda*, 76), he noted only the reference to Ḥujr. Kinda's dominant position in inner and central Arabia outside the *limes* is reflected in the number of its attested *jarrārs*: of 19 such among the South Arabs, 9 were of Kinda (see al-*Muḥabbar*, 251–52). This motivated Byzantium to keep its alliance with Kinda alive.

<sup>478</sup> See the analysis of the embassy in "Byzantium and Kinda," 59–61.

<sup>479</sup> On place names in the epitome see *BASIC II*, "Byzantium and Mecca."

the 502 treaty—military obligations on the part of Qays and Kinda, the *annona militaris* on that of Byzantium. These military obligations would have included the all-important participation in the war against Persia and its Lakhmid Arab allies, a clause Qays would have been happy to honor in view of his enmity toward the Lakhmids, who had killed his grandfather, Arethas. We note that Justinian himself masterminded the diplomatic offensive, sending out both embassies, that of Abraham followed shortly by that of Nonnosus.<sup>480</sup> The emperor had also personally backed the expedition against Mundir, writing to the dukes and phylarchs. Justinian showed his mastery in preceding the diplomatic effort with a military one, suggesting to Qays that Byzantium would not let his grandfather's death go unavenged. The effort succeeded: the treaty with a strategically located group was renewed, and Qays himself was finally removed from the Arabian scene and rewarded with a command in Oriens. In his personal leadership Justinian demonstrated his grasp of the military situation in the Arabian Peninsula and prepared the way for Julian's more comprehensive embassy. Perhaps his visit to Oriens when he was *magister militum* in the last years of his uncle's reign had given him first-hand knowledge of the situation on the eastern front and in the Peninsula, prompting him to be personally involved.

There was certainly a Greek version of the 528 treaty with Kinda, the text of which Abraham carried back with him to Justinian in the capital; it is inconceivable that there was no Arabic version. Kinda was a literate group that had used the Arabic language in its inscriptions for centuries before 528, as the discoveries at al-Faw have shown.<sup>481</sup> Qays' aunt Hind, the daughter of Arethas the Kindite, had the long Arabic inscription of Dayr Hind engraved some thirty years after Arethas' death,<sup>482</sup> and this too is the world of the sixth-century Arab phylarchs of Byzantium who recorded some of their activities in Arabic. If Nonnosus' original had survived, there might have been a description of how the *foedus* was renewed, similar to that in Menander's redaction of the Persian-Byzantine peace treaty of 561, in Greek and Persian.<sup>483</sup>

#### The Embassy of Nonnosus

Around 530 Abraham's son Nonnosus was sent on another embassy to Qays. He was instructed by Justinian to bring Qays to Constantinople if

<sup>480</sup> As he was to send Julian ca. 530 to negotiate with the Negus of Ethiopia and the king of Himyar. Personal negotiation among the "family of kings" was more effective, as can be seen from Julian's account of the Negus' reception; see above, 145.

<sup>481</sup> See A. al-Ansary, *Qaryat al-Faw: A Portrait of a Pre-Islamic Civilization in Saudi Arabia* (Riyadh, 1982).

<sup>482</sup> For the Dayr Hind inscription see Rothstein, *DLH*, 24.

<sup>483</sup> See *Menander the Guardsman*, trans. Blockley, 70.

possible, and then to proceed to Ethiopia and the Ḥimyarites.<sup>484</sup> It is clear from the epitome that Nonnosus failed to persuade Qays to go to the capital, a goal achieved later by his father Abraham on a third embassy to Qays. A number of points in this short account deserve comment. First, it has been argued that Nonnosus' embassy was part of a wider Byzantine diplomatic effort represented by the embassy of Julian.<sup>485</sup> To Nonnosus fell the Arabian part of the embassy, that is, negotiations with Qays. Nonnosus failed to persuade Qays to retire from the Arabian scene, and the next phase of his mission was to go to Ethiopia to inform Julian, the principal ambassador, of the outcome and thus to enable the latter to include Qays in his appeal to the Negus for cooperation in the military operations against Persia. Thus the date of Nonnosus' embassy must be the same as that of Julian. The latter does have some chronological data, for which we must select between Procopius' and Malalas' accounts. Malalas dates it to 530, when Justinian decided to seek the Ethiopian alliance, after his ambassador Rufinus had conveyed to him Kawad's evasive answer about the peace.<sup>486</sup> Procopius has Julian going to the Ethiopians and the Ḥimyarites after the battle of Callinicum,<sup>487</sup> inspired by a desire to harm the Persians after the Byzantine defeat: thus he dates it to 531. The choice is difficult;<sup>488</sup> one might best assign Julian's embassy to the span 530/31.

The epitome's phrase εἰ δύναντον, "if possible," refers to what Procopius relates: that Qays had killed a relative of Esimiphæus the Ḥimyarite king; hence Byzantium's desire to withdraw him "if possible" from the Arabian scene so that military preparations in Arabia would proceed smoothly.<sup>489</sup> Qays refused to be treated as dispensable, possibly unhappy because of Byzantium's pro-Ghassānid policy that gave Abū Karib the phylarchate of Palaestina Tertia and made Arethas *basileus* extraordinary. He may also have preferred to stay in charge of his Arabian patrimony to carry on his war of revenge against Mundir.<sup>490</sup>

Procopius gives more information than the epitome on the date when Nonnosus visited Qays. He tells of Qays' murder of Esimiphæus' relative and thus his fugitive status, and that Byzantium tried to persuade Esimiphæus

<sup>484</sup> See "Byzantium and Kinda," 61–66.

<sup>485</sup> In *ibid.*, p. 63, line 11; for "Arabia" read "Ethiopia."

<sup>486</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 456–57.

<sup>487</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xix.1; I.xx.9.

<sup>488</sup> Stein (*HBE*, II, 298) opted for 530, followed by the present writer in "Byzantium and Kinda," 63; Bury (*HLRE*, II) favored 531; I now incline toward the span 530/31. Cf. above, note 426.

<sup>489</sup> "Byzantium and Kinda," 65.

<sup>490</sup> "Procopius and Kinda," 76.



nonetheless to accept Qays and put him in command of Ma'add. Although he gives these facts as an expression of his *Kaiserkritik*, they are still of value.

#### The Second Embassy of Abraham

The epitome is relatively detailed on Abraham's second embassy, relating that he went to Qays, persuaded him to give up his chieftainship in Arabia and divide it between his two brothers 'Amr and Yazīd, and also to go to Constantinople and accept an appointment in Palestine, where he went with a large number of his followers. Qays' difficult position in Arabia finally compelled him to accept Byzantium's offer, as explained in an earlier study,<sup>491</sup> which dated this embassy to the period between Julian's embassy in 530/31 and the end of the first Persian war in 532.

Although Abraham had renewed the *foedus* with Kinda on his first visit to Qays, it is doubtful that the *φυλαρχία* referred to in the epitome was the Byzantine office. From the context it is more likely to have been the Arabian chieftainship that Qays agreed to divide between his two brothers. Of the two, Yazīd is the better attested in the sources. Although 'Amr might have been the chief who was taken prisoner at the battle of Callinicum, this is unlikely, since that 'Amr was more probably a Ghassānid phylarch.<sup>492</sup> Yazīd, however, is known from the Arabic sources, where he is described as the father of a *jarrār* (warrior) who commanded a thousand men (chiliarch). His son's name is given as Ḥujr, a good Kindite name. The same sources refer to Qays as a *jarrār* and as the brother of Yazīd and 'Amr, sons of Salama,<sup>493</sup> thus confirming that the Qays of the epitome was a grandson of Arethas through the latter's son Salama.<sup>494</sup> His name appears in a Latin source for the year 536, but whether the Yazīd mentioned by Marcellinus Comes is the same as the Kindite chief remains to be shown.<sup>495</sup>

We must now consider the meaning of the *hēgemonia* and the territorial jurisdiction of Qays in the three Palestines. It is noteworthy that the term for the command given to Qays is not the usual *φυλαρχία* but *ἡγεμονία*. The heir to the power of Kinda, who had to be mollified after the inglorious exit of his grandfather, could be satisfied only with an extraordinary command, not the usual *phylarchia*, especially in view of the advancement of the rival federate group, Ghassān, and the conferment of the extraordinary *Basileia* on its chief representative, Arethas. Hence the employment of a term to reflect

<sup>491</sup> See "Byzantium and Kinda," 66–70.

<sup>492</sup> See above, 137, contradicting the earlier position in "Byzantium and Kinda," 67 note 19. If Julian's embassy was dispatched in 531 (Procopius), not 530 (Malalas), this rules out Callinicum's 'Amr as a Kindite chief.

<sup>493</sup> Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 525.

<sup>494</sup> See BASIC II.

<sup>495</sup> See below, 194–96.



this privileged position for Qays, the *hēgemonia*. With the exception of Palaestina Tertia, which was a "fighting" province in the limitrophe subject to Saracen invasions, the two other Palestines were relatively peaceful. Tertia, however, was already the province of the Ghassānid Abū Karib. It is therefore more than likely that the *hēgemonia* was an honorary one, which, if it was not a sinecure,<sup>496</sup> left Qays little to do as a fighting phylarch.<sup>497</sup> The epitome also mentions Qays' journey to Constantinople. This must have been part of the Byzantine diplomatic offer, the enticement of a flattering visit to the capital and the privilege of an audience with the emperor, as was common Byzantine diplomatic practice in dealing with barbarian princes. The visit recalls that of the fifth-century phylarch Amorkesos, during the reign of Leo, who was rewarded with the *phylarchia* of Palaestina Tertia.

The epitome speaks of Qays' territorial jurisdiction in terms of τῶν Παλαιστίνων, plural, meaning that his *hēgemonia* was over two or three of the Palestines. The phylarchal and federate situation in these three provinces was as follows: Palaestina Prima had the phylarchs of the Parembolē, in a state of decline; Secunda, especially in the Jawlān (Gaulanitis) region, was Ghassānid, under Arethas; Tertia was also Ghassānid, under Abū Karib. Qays' territorial jurisdiction was most probably effective in the long strip west of the Jordan and Wādī 'Araba. The portion of Secunda west of the Jordan extending into Galilaea would have room for a Kindite phylarch without giving rise to friction with a Ghassānid east of the Jordan.<sup>498</sup> Tertia was also vast in area, and it is quite likely that an enclave was found for Qays in the Negev and northern Sinai. Given the state of the Parembolē in Prima,<sup>499</sup> there would have been room for a new phylarch and federate such as Qays.<sup>500</sup> The placement of his headquarters and the stationing of his numerous Kindite federates are not

<sup>496</sup> Since Nöldeke wrote before the discovery of the Sabaic Dam inscription, he did not know that Arethas and Abū Karib were brothers, and so misconceived their relations; cf. above, note 327 (*GF*, 17 note 1).

<sup>497</sup> The novel on Palestine of 536 mentions, not a phylarch or *dux*, but a *stratēgos* in the province. For this and Qays, see below, 200–205.

<sup>498</sup> Technically Arethas the Ghassānid was the phylarch of the Provincia Arabia; he was also phylarch of Palaestina Secunda so far as the Gaulanitis was concerned since this was the location of his center, Jābiya. This corrects the position ("Byzantium and Kinda," 68) that Secunda was outside Ghassānid phylarchal jurisdiction.

<sup>499</sup> If Cyril of Scythopolis' phylarch, Aswad, was a Kindite, this would confirm Kindite phylarchal presence in Prima. His quarrel with Arethas the Ghassānid could show that the *modus vivendi* between the two federate groups collapsed in the 550s; see below, 251–55.

<sup>500</sup> In the 7th century it was a Kindite general, Shuraḥbīl ibn-Ḥasna, who conquered for Islam the Jund of al-Urdunn (Jordan), the Byzantine province roughly coterminous with Palaestina Secunda. Could the caliph Abū Bakr have sent him there because of a strong Kindite presence? See Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, I, 138–39. On the Jund of al-Urdunn see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic," *Byzantion* 57 (1987), maps I and III.

clear; perhaps his men were settled in the Negev and Sinai. The coming of the Kindites to Palestine added one more Arab ethnic strain to the federate structure in Palestine, alongside the Ghassānids and the phylarchs of the Parembole.

This imaginative solution<sup>501</sup> concluded a series of Byzantine diplomatic efforts to bring Kinda back within the Byzantine fold. This powerful tribal group was now fully restored to the confidence of Byzantium. Now it had one presence *extra limitem* in the Peninsula as a member of the Outer Shield of federate tribes loyal to Byzantium, and another in Oriens in the three Palestines. The accommodation of Kinda balances that of the Ghassānids: both groups had lost their respective chiefs in 528, but four years later they are flourishing, with Ghassān emerging as the principal federate group and its chief Arethas elevated to the *Basileia*, while Kinda is given an extraordinary command in the three Palestines, in its supra-provincial character not unlike the *Basileia* of the Ghassānid.

Byzantine-Kindite relations had come a long way from their fifth-century hostile state when the tribe appeared in central and northern Arabia, buttressed by the power of Ḥimyar. At the battle of Baradān<sup>502</sup> it fought Byzantium's allies the Salīhids. Around the year 500 it attacked the *limes* in Palestine, but was finally accepted as an ally by the treaty of 502. Good relations obtained for a quarter century until Arethas' quarrel with Diomedes in 528; four years later they were fully restored in both the Peninsula and Oriens, a triumph for Byzantine diplomacy and for the Arab policy of Justinian.

#### XIV. BYZANTIUM AND MA<sup>ʿ</sup>ADD (THE *MADDĒNOI*)

Analysis of Procopius' and Nonnosus' accounts of Byzantine diplomatic relations with the Arabs of the Peninsula has revealed that the large Arab tribal confederation known as Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>add came within Byzantium's scheme of things in the East. Though Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>add was outside the *limes*, deep in the heart of Arabia, it was an important political and military factor that Byzantium had to take into account, both as a potential raider of the *limes* and as a potential satellite against the Persians and their Lakhmid allies. Byzantium was able to control Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>add and draw it into its orbit through the 502 *foedus* with Kinda. Under the kingship of Arethas the Kindite, Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>add was under control, but after his death its history took another course, though it remained an important factor in Byzantium's relations with the Arabs.

References to Ma<sup>ʿ</sup>add in the Greek sources check and complement those

<sup>501</sup> It returned to Qays the same province over which his grandfather had been phylarch (although Arethas had most probably been in Tertia).

<sup>502</sup> See *BAFIC*, 263–64.

in the Arabic sources, along the lines of Nöldeke's technique of assessing the latter according to their coming from much later Islamic times. His earlier scholarship also noticed references in Syriac sources, albeit in a cursory way.<sup>503</sup> I. Goldziher followed Nöldeke, but was interested in the antagonism between the northern and the southern Arabs in which northern Ma'add figured, dating it to the Islamic period and ascribing it to the rivalry between two groups, the *muhajirūn*, the immigrants from Mecca, and the *anṣār*, the companions of the Prophet in Medina. As to the pre-Islamic period, he was inclined to ascribe it to a consciousness of difference between two large branches of the Arab people.<sup>504</sup>

The two scholars wrote before some crucial evidence, mainly epigraphic, turned up: two inscriptions—the Arabic Namāra and the Sabaic Murayghān, in both of which Ma'add is mentioned.<sup>505</sup> Hence their reservations on attestations of the term Ma'add in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry<sup>506</sup> were not justified, nor was Goldziher's view that their antagonism was Islamic and not pre-Islamic.<sup>507</sup> The entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* on Ma'add follows both Nöldeke and Goldziher and is written without attention to the discovery of the two crucial inscriptions of pre-Islamic times.<sup>508</sup> Hence a return to Ma'add is now necessary in view of its importance both for Arab history before the rise of Islam and for its being a new sphere of Byzantine influence in Arabia in the sixth century. This return entails the serious examination of the attestations of Ma'add in the Greek and Syriac sources, in the inscriptions, and in pre-Islamic poetry in light of the new degree of historicity that Ma'add has acquired through the discovery of the two inscriptions. Such an examination will make possible a return to the Arabic prose works on Ma'add for redeeming what is historical. The exaggerated claims of the genealogists who constructed artificial schemes of descent for the Arabs may be ignored since they presented Ma'add as a collective term for all the northern Arabs and the father of Nizār

<sup>503</sup> See his review of W. Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (Cambridge, 1885), in *ZDMG* 40 (1886), 148–87, esp. 179, 186 on Ma'add.

<sup>504</sup> See section 5 of the chapter "The Arabic Tribes and Islam," in *Muhammadan Studies*, trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (Albany, 1966), 87–97, esp. 88, 89, 92 on Ma'add.

<sup>505</sup> See below, note 523, and Appendix IV.

<sup>506</sup> In such poets as al-Nābigha al-Dubyani and Ḥassān ibn-Thābit, both fundamental for Ghassānid history in its later phases; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>507</sup> This antagonism must go back in some form to pre-Islamic times, owing to the wanderings of southern Arabs (groups such as al-Azd and Kinda) into central and north Arabia. Also, it is possible that the formation of the large confederation of Quḍā'a in northern Arabia (*BAFIC*, 383–84) gave rise to the formation of the Ma'add confederation, which would have felt its position endangered both by Quḍā'a and by the coming into the north of the southern Arabs.

<sup>508</sup> See *El*<sup>2</sup>, V, 894–95.

from whom the three large groups—Rabīʿa, Muḍar, and Iyād—were descended.<sup>509</sup> This must of course be ignored. Instead, it can easily be maintained that Maʿadd was indeed a *ḥilf*, a large confederation of northern Arab tribes, but the question must remain open which tribes it comprised. There is evidence that it contained tribes from the two main groups, Rabīʿa and Muḍar, but how many and which tribes it comprised is not entirely clear. With this revised and restricted denotation of the term Maʿadd as a *ḥilf*, the attestations may now be examined in chronological order.

1. The Namāra inscription,<sup>510</sup> dated A.D. 328, shows that Maʿadd was a very old tribal group, going back at least to the beginning of the fourth century. It also reflects the relation of Maʿadd to Nizār, contradicting the genealogists' construction of a father-and-son relation between the first and the second. It can also be argued from the conquests of Imru' al-Qays that Maʿadd was possibly settled in Ḥijāz in this century.<sup>511</sup>

2. The Arabic sources speak of Ḥimyar's putting the kings of Kinda, their clients, in command of Maʿadd. There must be an element of truth in this, since we know that in the first quarter of the sixth century Arethas the Kindite was the king of Maʿadd, over whom he appointed his sons. Ḥimyar was the dominant power in the Peninsula, and it is only with the support of such a power that Kinda could have achieved supremacy over the large tribal confederation of northern Arabs.<sup>512</sup> Ḥimyar, like Byzantium and Persia, was probably subject to the raids of the Arab pastoralists, and it was probably in order to contain these raids that Ḥimyar controlled Maʿadd through Kinda, which moved in Ḥimyar's orbit. Byzantium was to do the same by concluding a *foedus* with Kinda in 502. By that time Kinda had distanced itself from Ḥimyar and apparently become an independent power in central and northern Arabia.

3. The letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām of around 520 refers to Maʿadd. He says that "the Saracens, pagan and Maʿaddāyē" taunted his party about the persecution of the Christians in Najrān (South Arabia) and elsewhere.<sup>513</sup> This reference locates Maʿadd (or part of it) in eastern Arabia, not far from Ramla, where Simeon was, which came under Muḍir. It could also imply that the

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> For the inscription and commentary see *BAFOC*, 31–47. For the latest English translation, with new readings and controversial new interpretations, see J. Bellamy, "A New Reading of the Namara Inscription," *JAOS* 105 (1985), 46–47.

<sup>511</sup> On Maʿadd in Ḥijāz, see the next note and below, note 517.

<sup>512</sup> See Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh*, II, 569. Procopius too speaks of the Maʿadd in Ḥijāz as subjects of the Ḥimyarites in the 6th century; *History*, I.xix.14.

<sup>513</sup> In the Latin translation of Zacharia the phrase reads "Ṭayāyē, pagani et Maʿdāyē": *HE* (CSCO 88), p. 44, lines 8–9. For Simeon's letter and other evidence see *Martyrs*, 113–31.

Ma'add were Christian,<sup>514</sup> although the term "Ma'addāye" carried a different implication according to other views.<sup>515</sup> Christianity is in fact known to have spread among some of the tribes of Ma'add.<sup>516</sup> In view of this, it is possible that this was at least partly the result of Kinda's association with Ma'add, since Kinda is known to have been Christian, possibly since its treaty with Byzantium in 502. If Kinda contributed to the spread of Christianity among the Ma'add group, it is another of their contributions in the cultural history of the Arabs.

4. In Procopius' ethnographic digression to the embassy of Julian in 530, he mentions that the western coast of Arabia between the Ḥimyarites of South Arabia and the Saracens of northern Ḥijāz was inhabited by the *Maddenoi*,<sup>517</sup> adding that they were subject to the Ḥimyarites. This locates part of Ma'add in the middle sector of the west coast of Arabia and reflects their dependence on Ḥimyar. The first datum testifies to the fact that Ma'add was a large confederation with wide diffusion over Arabia. The location of some of them in Ḥijāz suggests that those belonged to the Muḍar group, while the reference in Simeon's letter suggests that those belonged to the Rabī'a group. This confirms some, but by no means all, of the genealogists' assertions about these two groups' being subsumed under Ma'add. Procopius' second datum confirms the Arabic sources' statement that Ḥimyar, their ruler, put its client Kinda in command of Ma'add.

5. In his account of his family's diplomacy, Nonnosus states that Qays the Kindite ruled over both Kinda and Ma'add, the best known among the Saracens.<sup>518</sup> This statement also confirms the Arabic evidence for Kinda's com-

<sup>514</sup> Both "pagan" and "Ma'add" are in apposition to "Ṭayāyē," Saracens; the natural reading is that "Ma'add" is an antonym to "pagans." Simeon does not, however, explicitly say that these were Christian Arabs; perhaps because they were not Monophysites, "orthodox" in Simeon's eyes, but possibly Nestorians and hence not termed Christians by someone holding Simeon's strong views (cf. *Martyrs*, 44, 171). Their being Nestorians would also explain why they taunted Simeon's party on the persecution of Monophysites in Najrān. The hostility between the two confessions was strong, as we see from the Nestorian catholicus Shilas' attitude toward the Monophysites at the conference of Ramla (cf. PO 7, cols. 135–38). The religion of Ma'add may also have been a syncretism of pagan and Judaeo-Christian elements, especially "Ishmaelism" or "Abrahamism" (cf. for the latter Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 254).

<sup>515</sup> Nöldeke thought in this context it meant "Beduinen" or "reine Araber" (rev. of Robertson Smith [above, note 503], p. 179 note 3); this, however, does not preclude Christian affiliation.

<sup>516</sup> Portions of Quraysh, Tamīm, and Taghlib, among others. On the Christianity of some of the pre-Islamic Arab tribes cf. Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 257.

<sup>517</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xix.14. Procopius' statement that the Ma'add possessed the coast of western Arabia between the Saracens of Abū Karib and the Ḥimyarites of the south confirms the Arabic sources' tradition that associates Ma'add with Mecca, locating it in Tihāma, the coast of western Arabia; Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 254.

<sup>518</sup> Photius, *Bibliothèque*, ed. Henry, I, p. 4, lines 35–36.

mand over Ma'add, this time also in Greek. It also reinforces statements in the Arabic tradition about the importance of the two groups in pre-Islamic Arabia. In Nonnosus' account this statement occurs in connection with Abraham's first mission, dated 528/29. His statement on the groups' importance explains Byzantium's great interest in Qays and its several missions to court him. As Nonnosus' account was an official document, his evidence may be considered accurate on Ma'add's importance to the empire's Arabian policy.

6. Procopius also refers to Ma'add in connection with the embassy of Julian.<sup>519</sup> He is speaking of Julian's request that Esimiphaeus, the ruler of South Arabia, reinstate Qays over Ma'add in order to prosecute the war against the Persians effectively. This implies that Ma'add had rebelled against Qays' authority.<sup>520</sup> This too agrees with the Arabic sources' statements on the constant uprisings in the Ma'addite camp against the authority of Kinda, especially after the death of Arethas the Kindite, and on the internecine war between his sons.

7. Procopius' and Nonnosus' data are the best background for discussing a passage in a sixth-century, pre-Islamic poem that involves both Ma'add and Qays. In one of the Suspended Odes, the poet, al-Ḥārith ibn-Ḥilliza, recites his ode before the Lakhmid king 'Amr ibn-Hind (554–569), enumerating the services of his tribe, Bakr, to the Lakhmids, especially to 'Amr's father Munḍir. One of these services was their repulse of an attack by Ma'add under Qays against the Lakhmids. The relevant verse speaks of Bakr's service "To the East of al-Shaqīqa when Ma'add came, each group under its banner" rallying round Qays.<sup>521</sup> Another reading of the verse has, instead of "Ma'add," the word *jamī'an*, "all of them."<sup>522</sup> This, however, is an inferior reading, made unaccept-

<sup>519</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xx.9–10.

<sup>520</sup> Not only because, according to Procopius, Qays had killed one of Esimiphaeus' relatives.

<sup>521</sup> See al-Zawzani, *Sharḥ al-Mu'allaqat al-Sab'*, ed. M. Ḥamīdullāh (Damascus, 1963), 299. The commentator, Zawzani, thinks that the Qays involved in this is the son of Ma'dikarib; but in fact he is the Qays of Nonnosus, and this is Qays, son of Salama, grandson of Arethas the Kindite. Here Greek sources illuminate the Arabic. The view that Qays was the son of Ma'dikarib is pure guesswork and may be inferred from the statement by the philologist Abū 'Amr ibn-al-'Alā' that he did not know who this Qays was; see M. ibn al-Anbārī, *Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-Sab'*, ed. A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1963), 494.

<sup>522</sup> See C. J. Lyall, *A Commentary on Ten Ancient Arabic Poems* (Calcutta, 1894), 139. Although Nöldeke noted the historical importance of this ode, he failed to identify its Qays with the Qays of Nonnosus and Procopius. In the verse mentioning Qays he misconstrued the word *karāziy* as a proper noun, with reservations in a note; see *Fünf Mo'allaqat* (Vienna, 1899–1901), p. 64, verse 50, with note 7; for historical comments cf. *ibid.*, 53. Some commentators thought this campaign took place during the reign of 'Amr son of Munḍir (554–569), the addressee of the poem. However, the poet was enumerating services rendered the Lakhmids by the tribe of Bakr, for the most part during the reigns of 'Amr's predecessors, e.g., in the campaign of Ḥujr the Kindite against the Lakhmids.



able by the historical background provided by the Greek historians who tell us that Qays was the head of Ma'add, while the Semitic alliance initiated military action for Byzantium against the Lakhmids, spearheaded by Kinda and Ma'add under Qays. Here it is Greek sources that help determine the meaning of an Arabic text.

8. The Murayghān inscription,<sup>523</sup> in Sabaic, speaks of the campaign of Abraha, the ruler of South Arabia around 550, against Ma'add. The latter is mentioned several times in the inscription, which is also remarkable for its precise toponymic data. Troops of Abraha, including the Kindites of South Arabia, fought the tribe of 'Āmir not far from Turāba, while Abraha himself fought and defeated Ma'add at Ḥalibān (Ḥulubān) in central Arabia. The Lakhmids were involved, since 'Amr, Mundir's son, appears in the inscription as having been invested with the governorship of Ma'add by his father. The battle of Ḥalibān was a victory for Abraha against Ma'add and their Lakhmid ruler.

Among the many historical dimensions of this inscription,<sup>524</sup> the most relevant concerns Ma'add. It appears around the middle of the sixth century as an important military power in South Arabia, so much so that the ruler of South Arabia finds it necessary to campaign against it. Furthermore, Ma'add, the ally of Byzantium through Kinda, now appears under the rule of the Lakhmids. This must mean only part of Ma'add, as would be consonant with the fact of Kinda's decline after the death of Arethas in 528. His death and the consequent internecine war between his sons, whom he had put in command of Ma'add, contributed to the relaxation of Kinda's control over the whole confederation. Consequently the various tribal groups that constituted Ma'add started to move in various political orbits, one of which was that of the Lakhmids. Thus the relevance of Ma'add to Byzantine foreign policy in Arabia, reflected in Nonnosus and Procopius, becomes even clearer in this inscription. A former ally, or part of it, is now fighting with the Lakhmids, clients of Byzantium's age-old enemy, Persia.<sup>525</sup>

The history of Byzantine-Ma'addite relations parallels that of Kindite-Byzantine relations.<sup>526</sup> Before the 502 treaty with Kinda, Ma'add probably raided the Byzantine frontier and took part in the battle of Baradān in which Kinda fought Byzantium's federates the Salihids. When Kinda concluded a treaty with Byzantium in 502, Ma'add naturally moved in the Byzantine orbit

<sup>523</sup> See A. F. L. Beeston, "Notes on the Muraighan Inscription," *BSOAS* 16 (1954), 389-92; M. J. Kister, "The Campaign of Huluban," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), 425-36.

<sup>524</sup> See also *BASIC* II.

<sup>525</sup> This does not rule out that some of the Ma'add were associated with the Lakhmids even before the decline of Kinda, but with this decline more Ma'addites must have inclined toward the Lakhmids or been made subject by them.

<sup>526</sup> See above, 19-22, 148-60.



and continued to do so at least until the death of Arethas the Kindite in 528 and somewhat after. As long as Kinda remained powerful, it stayed in control of Ma'add; but with Kinda's decline Byzantium lost its indirect control over the whole of Ma'add, some of whose tribes are now attested as fighting with the Lakhmids. The political and military vacuum created in central Arabia by the decline of Kinda must have had serious implications for security along the *Limes orientalis*. It also added one more responsibility to the burden of the Ghassānid supreme phylarch. Pre-Islamic poetry<sup>527</sup> documents the Ghassānid phylarch's brushes with Tamīm, Taghlib, and Asad, tribes of the Ma'add confederation that had formerly been controlled by the power of federate Kinda and had moved in the Byzantine orbit.

#### XV. SARACEN POCKETS IN THE THREE PALESTINES

The administrative history of Palestine is complex, divided as it was into three parts, with territorial additions that had not belonged to it, and with many ethnic groups settled in it.<sup>528</sup> One of these were the Saracens to be found in each of the three Palestines, who thus added to the complexity of the administrative structure of the province. Without a knowledge of this Saracen presence in each of the three parts of Palestine, it is difficult to understand the reference to the Saracens in the work of Choricus of Gaza and, more importantly, in Justinian's Novel 103 (May 536) with implied reference to the Saracens. It is therefore important to discuss their diffusion in the province. Since the fortunes of these three pockets have previously been treated separately, a synoptic view of this presence will be presented here.

#### Palaestina Prima

The Saracens of the Parembole were the oldest federate Saracen community in Palaestina Prima; they were settled in the Desert of Juda in the 430s and survived into the sixth century. Although not much is known about them in the later period, about the middle of the sixth century one of their phylarchs, Terebon II, is mentioned by Cyril of Scythopolis. After this the sources are silent on them, but they must have survived this last notice by the hagiographer.<sup>529</sup> In addition to these federates, Prima must have had its share of non-federated Saracens, pastoralists who roamed the arid areas near the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea. Such were the Saracens mentioned in the ecclesiasti-

<sup>527</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>528</sup> It was the only tripartite province in Oriens. Much of it had belonged to the Provincia Arabia, especially the arid south; it was inhabited by Jews, Samaritans, Saracens, Aramaic-speaking Semitic communities, Greeks, and some Romans.

<sup>529</sup> For the phylarchs of the Parembole in the 5th century, see *BAFIC*, 185–91. On Terebon II see *ibid.*, 190; and on their possible survival into the 6th century and later, *ibid.*

cal histories of Cyril of Scythopolis<sup>530</sup> and John Moschus<sup>531</sup> as constituting a threat to the monks in Palaestina Prima. To these may be added another group whose existence in Prima was revealed by the Edict of Beersheba. The chiefs of these Saracens are termed not φύλαρχοι but ἀρχίφυλοι, and the term κοινόν, "group, association," is used of these phylarchs. It is not clear whether these Saracens were tributary non-federated Arab chiefs or *foederati* ruled by phylarchs.<sup>532</sup>

To these groups were added around 530 those of Kinda, federated Saracens who had come with Qays as a result of Abraham's diplomacy. The place of their settlement and the location of Qays' *hēgemonia* in more than one Palestine are not clear.<sup>533</sup> Although Justinian did extend the supreme phylarchate and *Basileia* to Arethas the Ghassānid around 529, it is not clear whether this extended his authority to Palaestina Prima. This could possibly be inferred from the strife that broke out between Arethas and a phylarch named Aswad, presumably a Kindite, in the 540s.<sup>534</sup>

#### Palaestina Secunda

The only Saracen presence attested in this part of the province is that of the Ghassānids. Their capital, al-Jābiya, was located there in Gaulanitis. Unlike that of Prima, the federate presence in Secunda does have an association with a definite toponym, Jābiya.<sup>535</sup>

#### Palaestina Tertia

Notwithstanding the number of groups of Saracens found in Prima and Secunda, it was in Tertia, mostly in Sinai and the Trans-<sup>c</sup>Arabian region, that most were settled. In the Trans-<sup>c</sup>Arabian region, extending to northern Ḥijāz, there were the Ghassānid Arabs ruled by Abū Karib, who had presented Phoinikōn to Justinian. In Sinai there were pockets of Saracens, the descendants of those whose existence the *Ammonii Monachi Relatio* reveals: federated Arabs who protected the monastery of Sinai; non-federates who attacked the monastery and its surrounding hermitages; and those around Phārān who fought the Blemmyes, possibly Christianized federated Arabs.<sup>536</sup> They are attested in the fourth century, and the presumption is that their descendants continued into the sixth. We also have, for the fifth century, the *S. Nili Narrationes*, which

<sup>530</sup> See *BAFIC*, 199–207.

<sup>531</sup> For references to the Saracens in John Moschus, see below, 597–601.

<sup>532</sup> See *BAFIC*, 139–42.

<sup>533</sup> See above, 158–60.

<sup>534</sup> The Parembolē Saracens were Chalcedonians, while the Ghassānids were Monophysites, confessional differences thus giving rise to disharmony among the various groups.

<sup>535</sup> Ghassānid toponymy will be fully discussed in *BASIC II*.

<sup>536</sup> See *BAFOC*, 297–308.

also reveal groups of Saracens similar to those of the fourth, who may be related to them: non-federates who attacked a caravan near Phārān and nearby monks; and federates in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, almost twelve days' journey from Phārān. The *Narrationes* relate a curious kind of *foedus* between the king of these federates and the city of Phārān.<sup>537</sup> A relation between the Saracens of the fourth-century *Relatio* and those of the fifth-century *Narrationes* is not entirely clear; the latter may be the descendants of the former, some of whom must have survived into the sixth century.

Entirely different from all these are the Rhomaic Arabs of Palaestina Tertia, who lived in such urban centers as Phārān, Raithou, and Ayla.<sup>538</sup> Perhaps more important is the cluster of towns that dot the north of Tertia in the Negev, which might be termed "Nabataea Christiana," old Nabataean towns now deserted but which have recently become important archaeological sites in Israel. Excavation has revealed the churches and buildings of many such towns, of which the most important are Elusa, Ruheibeh/Rehovot, Nessana, Subeita/Shivta, Eboda/Avdat, and Kurnub/Mampsis.<sup>539</sup> Within this cluster of towns, which might be termed the Hexapolis of Palaestina Tertia, Nessana is unique on account of the papyri discovered at the site,<sup>540</sup> until that time the only papyrus find to come to light outside Egypt other than Dura-Europos. These papyri reveal the intimate life of an old Nabataean Arab Christianized community in the early Byzantine period and extending into the early Islamic period.<sup>541</sup> *P.Ness.* III 160 has a tantalizing reference to a newly appointed pylarch.<sup>542</sup>

#### XVI. MALALAS ON THE FEDERATE ARABS

The preceding sections on the first Persian war of Justinian's reign will have revealed the importance of Malalas for rewriting its history, especially the

<sup>537</sup> See *BAFIC*, 134–39.

<sup>538</sup> See *BAFOC*, 303–8 and *BAFIC*, 135–39. On Ayla see *BAFIC*, 309, 313. Around 530 the Prophet Muḥammad concluded a treaty with the Arabs under Yūḥannā ibn-Ru'ba (cf. above, note 347).

<sup>539</sup> A treatment of these urban centers, whose inhabitants were thoroughly Byzantinized, belongs strictly speaking to Byzantine provincial history. The name of one Arab priest is known from an inscription from Subeita (Shivta), and another at Magen, for whom see *BAFIC*, 230 and appendix II. For a comprehensive account see B. Bagatti, "Antichi villaggi cristiani della Giudea e del Negev," in D. Sperber, *Economy of Byzantine Palestine* (Jerusalem, 1983), 185–206, with map opp. pl. 32.

<sup>540</sup> See *Excavations at Nessana*, I, ed. H. D. Colt (London, 1962); II, ed. L. Casson and E. I. Hettich (Princeton, 1950); III, ed. C. J. Kraemer (Princeton, 1958).

<sup>541</sup> For a short account of this in its relevance to Arab-Byzantine relations, see *BAFIC*, 143–45.

<sup>542</sup> See *Nessana*, III, p. 323, frag. 160, analyzed in *BAFIC*, 144–45.

elucidation of the role of the federate Arabs in that conflict.<sup>543</sup> Long before these sections were written, the present writer had targeted Malalas in articles published in the fifties as a crucial source for establishing the truth about what happened at the battle of Callinicum, fought in 531, and for supporting the view that in his description of the battle and other engagements of the war, Procopius was indulging in *Kaiserkritik*, involving Justinian and in acting as *praeco* for Belisarius.<sup>544</sup>

Research for the present volume necessitated a return to Malalas with a vengeance: every reference to the Arabs in his *Chronographia* had to be analyzed. The sections involving Malalas, however, have been written without the benefit of the second volume of the Australian Malalas project, *Studies in John Malalas*, as the book became available only after these sections were written. Therefore this section is devoted to a brief discussion of Malalas and the Arabs in light of this major contribution to our understanding of Malalas, the man and his work.

1. The *Quellenkritik* successfully undertaken by the Australian team may now be brought to bear on the treatment of the data provided by Malalas in the preceding sections. Vindication of Malalas in *Studies* fortifies in a substantial manner the confidence reposed in his narrative of the first Persian war and consequently in his emergence as a source of important data left out by Procopius. The following are the most relevant elements<sup>545</sup> that may be extracted from *Studies* for this purpose, and they make a further defense of Malalas superfluous.

a. His account of the first Persian war of Justinian's reign formed part of the first edition of his work, which he carried to A.D. 532, the year of the conclusion of the Endless Peace. Although it was well argued in *Studies* that even the second edition that carried the narrative to the end of Justinian's reign was also his work, there may linger some doubts about the validity of this view. But there is no doubt about his authorship of the first edition.

b. The preceding is an important point because the chronographer who wrote this first edition did so when he was still living in Antioch, the capital of Oriens and its most important city, and before he moved to Constantinople. This meant that he was close to the events he described, *inter alia*, those of the first Persian war. That war affected his native city, and he must have been an eyewitness of some of the events he described.

<sup>543</sup> For research on Malalas in the 1940s and the post-World War II period, see *Studies in John Malalas*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys et al. (Sydney, 1990), 338.

<sup>544</sup> See the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," "Byzantium and Kinda," and "Procopius and Kinda."

<sup>545</sup> A full discussion of these elements may be found in B. Croke, "Malalas, the Man and His Work," *Studies in John Malalas*, 1-25, and E. Jeffreys with B. Croke, "Malalas' Sources," *ibid.*, 167-216.

c. Most important is the fact that he had access to documents in Antioch—official archival documents—the most solid of all sources. The city was the seat of both the *comes Orientis* and the *magister militum*, hence the wide range of documents at his disposal. In all probability he worked at one of the *scrinia*, probably at the bureau of the *comes Orientis* itself, and this must have put him in a most privileged position to avail himself of these.

d. In addition to written documents, Malalas may have had access to oral information. And if he belonged to the *scrinium* of the *comes Orientis*, none other than Hermogenes, the *magister officiorum* during the years of the Persian war, may have been one of his informants. Constantiolus, too, may have been one of them, and he is especially important since Justinian sent him to the Orient to conduct an investigation after news of the defeat at Callinicum reached Constantinople. Hence Malalas' account of the battle of Callinicum and the role of the Ghassānid Arethas may have come from the "horse's mouth."<sup>546</sup>

2. Students of Malalas have always been aware of his importance as a mine of information on various aspects of Byzantine life and history. For instance, a chapter in *Studies* is devoted to his importance for the study of buildings and monuments, especially in Antioch and Constantinople.<sup>547</sup> Few scholars of Malalas, even those who recognize his value for the Persian war, are aware of his importance to the history of the Arabs, especially the federate Arabs of both Byzantium and Persia, particularly the former.<sup>548</sup> It is hoped that the preceding sections in this volume have filled this vacuum in the study of Malalas: (a) they have reconstructed the Arab federate war effort for the first Persian war and thus have given a fuller account of the course of that war; (b) they have provided sufficient data for a return to Procopius and the evaluation of both his account of that war and the *ira et studium* in his historiography; (c) and just as Malalas has been crucial for writing these chapters on the role of the Arabs, so has the elucidation of the role of the Arabs been helpful for understanding some of the statements in Malalas, for instance, that the Endless Peace concluded a war that had been going on for thirty-one years and that had started in the reign of Anastasius.<sup>549</sup>

The emergence of Malalas as a major source for Arab history in the first thirty years or so of the sixth century makes one regret that in the thirties he left his native Antioch for Constantinople where he lived for the rest of his

<sup>546</sup> On Constantiolus, whose dispatch to the Orient is recorded by Malalas, see "Procopius and Arethas," 48.

<sup>547</sup> See Ann Moffatt, "A Record of Public Buildings and Monuments," *Studies in John Malalas*, 87–109.

<sup>548</sup> The Arabs/Saracens do not appear in the index of *Studies in John Malalas*, and the only reference to them as "Arabian tribes" is a passing one on p. 10.

<sup>549</sup> For this, see Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 478.

life. This represented a shift in the focus of his interest from provincial Oriens to the capital. Although this was a gain for Constantinople, it was a loss to Antioch, Oriens, and the Arabs who lived in that diocese. Consequently Book XVIII on the reign of Justinian, the most valuable of the books of his *Chronographia*, which he wrote as a contemporary history, has nothing on the Arabs after his account of the first Persian war. In view of the wealth of information on the Arabs for the period before he left Antioch for Constantinople, his move to the capital constituted a veritable loss to the history of the Arabs, especially the Ghassānids, federates who were very active throughout the reign of Justinian. Had Malalas not moved to Constantinople, he would have remained a close observer of the scene in Antioch and Oriens and would have provided some valuable data on the Ghassānids, valuable in themselves and a check on the account of Procopius, especially on the second Persian war. Only the discovery of a better manuscript of Malalas than Baroccianus graecus 182, a remote possibility, can offer some chance of recovering some of these data.

3. The two splendid volumes of the Australian Malalas project, the *Chronicle*<sup>550</sup> and the *Studies*, have realized the hopes and expectations of Mommesen and Bury. The first spoke of "some young philologist" who might prepare a new edition of Malalas; the second understood that the puzzle of Malalas can be solved "not by the ingenuity of a single man but by the labors of a great many independent workers."<sup>551</sup> The Australian Malalas enterprise is indeed being conducted by scholars who are both young and many. The work is still in progress, and at least a third volume, a *Commentary*, is promised. Perhaps the foregoing sections on the Arab federates in Malalas and their role in the Persian war may be of some help to those who will write the *Commentary*. They also call for a study to be added to those that have already appeared, namely, an evaluation of Malalas as one of the most important sources for the history of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the sixth century.<sup>552</sup>

#### APPENDIX I

##### Justinian in Oriens

A Syriac source speaks of Justinian as *dux militum* in Oriens shortly before the death of his uncle Justin. In its Latin version the text reads: "Postquam regnavit Iustinianus annos novem, mortuus est sine filiis, et post eum regnavit Iustinianus alter, qui erat dux militum in Oriente." The same source later speaks of how Justinian met Theodora at Callinicum where her father was a priest: "Quando is Iustinianus, dux exercitus, missus est ab imperatore Iustiniano, eius decessore, in Orientem propter correc-

<sup>550</sup> *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott, et al., Byzantina Australiensia 4 (Melbourne, 1986).

<sup>551</sup> See *Studies in John Malalas*, 328, 334.

<sup>552</sup> Perhaps Aḥmad Shboul, a colleague and associate of the members of the Australian team, will do it.



tiones imperii, pervenit Callinicum."<sup>1</sup> The statement on Justinian and Theodora may be dismissed as an embroidery by the Monophysite writer for rehabilitating the empress whom Procopius portrayed as a reformed harlot. However, the statement that Justinian was in Oriens toward the end of Justin's reign is not incredible. Since Justinian was *magister utriusque militiae praesentalis*,<sup>2</sup> it is possible that he visited Oriens. The Syriac writer's language could suggest that he was *magister militum per Orientem*, but in fact he was not; perhaps all the Syriac writer was trying to say was that Justinian was sent to Oriens by his uncle on a tour of inspection, only using an ambiguous phrase translatable as *dux militum* or *dux exercitus*.<sup>3</sup>

To support the possibility of Justinian's presence in Oriens, we may note that the outbreak of hostilities between Byzantium and Persia may have alarmed Justin to the extent of sending his nephew to inspect the front in person, as the Syriac source has it, "propter correctiones imperii." This fits Justinian's known attention to detail and his penchant for attending to matters of state himself. Also, the presence of two of his followers, Sittas and Belisarius, in Oriens at this time might point to the same conclusion. As his bodyguards (*doryphoroi*), they could have accompanied him to Oriens.<sup>4</sup> Justinian's political and ecclesiastical interest in the East, because of the Persian and Monophysite problems, could have prompted him to see the region for himself. The reorganization of Oriens he undertook in his first regnal year<sup>5</sup> could suggest he knew it firsthand.

## APPENDIX II

### Phoenicia Libanensis: The Two Dukes

One of the very first acts of Justinian's reign was the reorganization of the military administration of Phoenicia Libanensis. He added a duke to the one already established there, and so the province now had two dukes, but it is not entirely clear from the sources where the seat of the new duke was. The emperor also ordered the newly appointed *comes Orientis*, Patricius, to reconstruct Palmyra, its churches, and its baths, and stationed a *numerus* and a number of *limitanei* there. On the basis of this and of a passage in Procopius, scholars have concluded that the new *dux* was stationed in Palmyra.<sup>1</sup> Why did the emperor think of Palmyra so early in his reign?

The background to this action must have been Mundir the Lakhmid's devastat-

<sup>1</sup> J. B. Chabot, ed. and trans., *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO 82 (Paris, 1920), versio, 151.

<sup>2</sup> PLRE, II, 646, omitting this reference.

<sup>3</sup> For the *magistri militum per Orientem* in Justin's last two or three years, see *ibid.*, 1291. The *magisterium* of the Orient was held by Hypatius and Liberalius; the history of the office in these two years is problematic, and whether Justinian can be fitted in remains to be shown.

<sup>4</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xii.21. Note that the two *doryphoroi* are described as "bodyguards of the general Justinian" (emphasis added).

<sup>5</sup> Such as the changes in the military administration of Phoenicia Libanensis, and the return of the Ghassānids. For Phoenicia, see below, Appendix II. On Malalas' statement that Justinian himself wrote to the Ghassānid phylarchs, cf. above, 70-72.

<sup>1</sup> See Malalas, *Chronographia*, 426, 441; and Procopius, *Buildings*, II.xi.10-12. Stein (*HBE*, II, 287) and Jones (*LRE*, I, 271) are agreed that Palmyra was the seat of the new *dux*.

ing raids during Justin's reign, raids reaching deep into Oriens, most especially the invasion as far as Emesa and Apamea in 527. Malalas does not state this in so many words, but this raid affecting Phoenicia Libanensis and Syria Secunda must have inspired Justinian's measures. Procopius does mention Saracens, but not Mundir by name, perhaps another of his studied omissions.

Malalas also states that Justinian had the defense of Jerusalem in mind, expecting the *dux* in Phoenicia to protect the Holy City. Mundir's raid as far as the Holy Land must have made the Roman authorities apprehensive about the safety of Palestine,<sup>2</sup> seeing that Mundir had taken a route from Palmyra to Emesa and Apamea. Byzantium wanted to protect the interior of Oriens by intercepting Mundir at Palmyra, lest he penetrate deeper into Roman territory.

Since two dukes were appointed for Phoenicia, one must ask if it was at this time that the number of phylarchs assigned to Phoenicia was also raised to two or more. In the edict on the province, of 536, more than one phylarch is referred to.<sup>3</sup> The chances are that the increased number of phylarchs went along with the increased number of dukes, hence can be dated to 527. In 528 three Arab phylarchs took part in the punitive expedition against Mundir, and dukes from Phoenicia also participated. Two of the phylarchs named by Malalas, Naaman and Jafna, may have been appointed to the newly reorganized province.<sup>4</sup> The equality of numbers suggests that each duke had a phylarch associated with him.

Palmyra was the last place Justinian fortified in his enormous building program all over the empire; Procopius mentions no site south of it. Though military reasons made this fortification reasonable, other reasons come to mind as well. Malalas refers to the biblical association of Palmyra with Solomon, the Old Testament king whom Justinian claimed to have surpassed in the building of Hagia Sophia. He could have wanted to emulate Solomon also in the building of this desert fortress.<sup>5</sup>

These changes in Phoenicia Libanensis were part of the reorganization of the whole of Oriens by Justinian.<sup>6</sup> It was the middle phase in the restructuring of that

<sup>2</sup> For a later threat from Sasanid Persia in the 7th century, see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Theme System," 400-401 and note 17.

<sup>3</sup> See below, 198-200.

<sup>4</sup> See above, 72-73

<sup>5</sup> There seems to be a mixture of truth and exaggeration in Procopius' description of the Palmyra program, that Justinian "strengthened it with defences that defy description" (*Buildings*, II.xi.12). Interpretation is divided on whether Solomon built "Tadmor" (Palmyra) as in 2 Chron. 8:4, or "Tamar . . . in the land of Juda" as in 1 Kings 9:18. For Malalas, who got it from Josephus, Solomon did build Tadmor/Palmyra, as Justinian may well have thought. Solomon's association with Palmyra is reflected in contemporary Arabic poetry, e.g., in the ode of Nābigha, a panegyrist of the Ghassānids; see BASIC II. The Josephus passage is *Antiq.* VIII.6.1.

<sup>6</sup> The two dukes are attested as early as 528, and after. A list is given in *PLRE*, III, s.v. *Duces Provinciarum*: A.D. 528 Buzes and Cutzes

540-43	Theoctistus with (a) Molaztes (540)
	(b) Ricithangus (541)
	(c) Ildiger (543)
587-88	Eilifredas with Germanus (588)

diocese, a process that began in the early fourth century and culminated in Heraclius' unfinished themes in the seventh.<sup>7</sup>

### APPENDIX III

#### Zacharia of Mytilene on Timostratus and Jabala

The Chronicle of Zacharia, so valuable for the events of this period, has two passages on Timostratus, the *dux* of Mesopotamia, and on Aṭfar/Jabala the Ghassānid. The Syriac text presents problems regarding the prosopography of the two officers.

1. In his description of the antecedents of the battle of Thannūris, Zacharia records the death of Timostratus, *dux* of Mesopotamia, in 527: "et, quod dux Timostratus στρατηλάτης mortuus erat, Belisarius ei successit."<sup>1</sup> The sentence presents Timostratus as a στρατηλάτης and implies that Belisarius succeeded him in the *magisterium* of the Orient in 527. The implication for Belisarius can be rejected, since it is known from reliable Greek sources that in 527 he was a *dux*, not being promoted to *magister militum per Orientem* until April 529.<sup>2</sup> One must ask whether Timostratus was a *stratēlatēs* as well as a *dux*, as in the usage of this phrase.

Though it has been suggested that the *magisterium* was only an honorary title,<sup>3</sup> it seems that the apparent contradiction can be resolved by considering the Syriac text before E. W. Brooks' emendation. The manuscript has "Ṭimos stratēlatēs dux." Brooks considered the name Timos incomplete, and emended by adding "-stratus" to give "Timostratus stratēlatēs dux," attributing to him both ranks simultaneously. This contradiction prompts one to seek a different solution. *Stratēlatēs* in the Syriac text could be the second part of Timostratus' name. The fact of its resemblance to the military title *stratēlatēs* caused the scribe to misconstrue it as that title, writing it separately and leaving a shortened non-name "Timos." Thus what we want is a sentence that can be rendered "et, quod dux Timostratus mortuus erat, . . ." This removes historians' difficulty with Timostratus' implied *magisterium* and the contradiction of having him assume the *ducatus* and the *magisterium* at the same time. He is left with the *ducatus*, which he is known from other sources to have had.<sup>4</sup>

2. When referring to the death of the Arab chief Aṭfar/Jabala at the battle of Thannūris in 528, Zacharia says that he was "shaken off from a short distance," "comminus concussus est."<sup>5</sup> In context this does not make much sense, and the ren-

<sup>7</sup> See the present writer in "Heraclius and the Theme System," and "Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations," *Byzantion* 59 (1989), 208–43.

<sup>1</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, p. 63, lines 31–32.

<sup>2</sup> See Stein, *HBE*, II, 284.

<sup>3</sup> See *PLRE*, II, 1120.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1119–20. In spite of the fact that I am more than inclined to believe that the emendation of the Syriac text of Zacharia solves the seeming contradiction in the simultaneous description of Timostratus as *dux* and *magister militum*, attention should be given to the possibility that *dux* Timostratus was a *magister militum vacans*. On these *duces*, see J. Durliat, "Magister Militum—ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ dans l'empire byzantin (VIe–VIIe siècles)," *BZ* 72 (1979), 306–20; especially the table on p. 319. On the *magistri militum* till the end of the reign of Leo in the 5th century, see the monumental article of A. Demandt, "Magister Militum," *RE*, Supp. XII (1970), cols. 553–790.

<sup>5</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, p. 64, lines 17–18.

dering *comminus* probably reflects a corruption. The key is Malalas' description of Aṭfar's death, saying that he was killed because his horse stumbled causing him to fall off to his death: τοῦ δὲ ἵππου Ταφαρῶ προσκόπσαντος κατενεχθεὶς ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἔσφάγη.<sup>6</sup> The Syriac underlying *comminus* is *kūrba*: this should be emended to *rkūbā*, "horse," meaning that Aṭfar was shaken (*ethnahaz*, "shaken" not "struck") from his horse and so fell to his death. Eliminating the scribe's metathesis by this emendation brings the text into line with what Malalas says.

## APPENDIX IV

## Ma'add

The importance of Ma'add, the large Arabian tribal group in Byzantium's scheme of things, makes it necessary to examine some data pertaining to it and relevant to answering two questions: was it a confederation, and was it Christian? Epigraphy, represented by the Namāra inscription, sheds light on the first question, and Syriac literary sources on the second.

## A

Notwithstanding its importance for the problem of the term Ma'add and the light it throws on Ma'add in the fourth century, the Namāra inscription does not specify whether in that century Ma'add was a tribe or a confederation. In the text of the inscription, the name is not preceded by any term to designate it as such. One may, however, argue that already in the fourth century Ma'add was a large tribal group or confederation.

First, the inscription presents Imru' al-Qays as king of all the Arabs. That the Arabian tribal names mentioned in the text are those of small tribes is not consistent with this.<sup>1</sup> Second, the text states that the king put his sons in charge of the various *ash'ub*.<sup>2</sup> If this means that they were placed over al-Asdayn, Nizar, and Ma'add, mentioned in the inscription as being under Imru' al-Qays, then the term describing them may be interpreted as meaning confederation or very large tribal group. *Sha'b* in Arabic<sup>3</sup> means a larger group than "tribe," *qabila*. It means in fact the largest tribal group, under which are subsumed five subdivisions, the largest of which is *fakhḍ* or *faṣīla*.<sup>4</sup> Other lexicographers add more subdivisions after *fakhḍ* such as *'ashīra*, *raht*, and *jidm*. The consensus is that the term denotes a very large tribal group; to one lexicographer, "the parent of the tribes to which they refer their origin, and which

<sup>6</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 441–42.

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Maḍhij, which was a tribe; it is noteworthy that in the text the king does not claim that he reigned over it (as he did over the other three tribal groups, Asdayn, Nizār, and Ma'add), but only that he put it to flight.

<sup>2</sup> For a parallel with Kinda and Arethas who did the same, see *BAFOC*, 44–45.

<sup>3</sup> In a related language, Sabaic, it apparently means "sedentary tribe, commune"; see A. F. L. Beeston et al., eds., *Sabaic Dictionary* (Louvain-la-Neuve and Beirut, 1982), 130.

<sup>4</sup> See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (repr. New York, 1956), I, pt. IV, 1556, s.v. *sha'b*. In a recent discussion of the inscription, this term is translated "the settled communities": A. F. L. Beeston, "Nemara and Faw," *BSOAS* 42 (1979), 6. However, this inscription is in Arabic, not Sabaic.

comprises them." It is noteworthy that it denotes tribes lineally descended from a parent tribe rather than groups not so closely related, but united by a *ḥilf*.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this was Ma'add's status in the fourth century, while later in pre-Islamic times it became a *ḥilf* comprising other tribes not lineally descended from the parent Ma'add. Thus it appears in the genealogical works as comprising the two large groups Rabī'a and Muḍar, or portions thereof.

When Ma'add appeared as a large tribal group or confederation is not clear. The Namāra inscription brings it close to A.D. 106 and 272, the fall of Arab Petra and Palmyra respectively. Ma'add may have been formed after the upheaval and dislocation in Arab tribal life caused by the fall of these cities, just as the large group Quḍā'a may have been formed in relation to these two events.<sup>6</sup>

## B

After the Namāra inscription, the most important reference to Ma'add comes in the letter of Simeon of Bēth-Arshām which he wrote sometime in the 520s. In that letter he spoke of his journey together with Abraham, Justin I's envoy, to the Lakhmid king Muḍir, whom they met at Ramla, a locality southeast of Ḥīra. When they reached Muḍir's camp, they were met by some Arabs who, in his own words, "advanced to meet us, the pagan Arabs and the Ma'addites, saying to us: What is there then for you to do from now on, since your Christ has been expelled by the Romans, the Persians, and the Himyarites, and from all lands?"<sup>7</sup>

The referents in the sentence are Arab tribal groups in northeastern Arabia in the sphere of influence of the Lakhmid king Muḍir. The former are described as pagan, while the latter are described simply by their tribal affiliation, Ma'addites, and the switch is rather surprising. One would have expected Simeon to describe the latter in religious terms since he started in that vein, but he does not. However, the natural presumption is that the Ma'addites were not pagans, since they were contrasted with those who were. If they were non-pagans, what then was their religious affiliation? The natural presumption is that they were Christian, since it is out of the question that they were Jews, Zoroastrians, or Manichaeans. But their Christianity remains only a presumption, in view of the surprising lack of an explicit statement by Simeon.

This presumption, however, becomes a certainty through a datum provided by Michael the Syrian. Among the lists that his *Chronicle* contains is one that comprises the names of Monophysite bishops ordained by Patriarch Basilius (consecrated in 923). One of these bishops is referred to as "Ioḥannan, évêque des Nédjayê et des Ma'adayê, du monastère de Qarqaphta."<sup>8</sup> This is an explicit statement on the Christianity of Ma'add. The tribal group could not possibly have converted to Christianity

<sup>5</sup> *Ḥilf* is the common later term for "confederation." In 4th-century Arabic, *sha'b* may also have been such a term.

<sup>6</sup> See BAFIC, 383-84, "Ma'add and Nizār."

<sup>7</sup> For the English version of Simeon's letter and this quotation, see A. Jeffery, "Christianity in South Arabia," *Anglican Theological Review* 27.3 (1945), 185-205; quotation on p. 195.

<sup>8</sup> See *Chronique*, III, p. 463, no. 13; for the Syriac, see p. 759, no. 13.

after the rise of Islam; so its Christianity must go back to pre-Islamic times, not the distant pre-Islamic period that is shrouded in obscurity but the most recent one, the sixth century, the eve of the rise of Islam, to which Simeon's letter belongs.

The question must now be asked why Simeon did not explicitly say that the Ma'add were Christian. The reason is that they are likely to have been Nestorians at that time, and there was so much ill-feeling between the two Christian confessions that the Monophysites were reluctant even to call the Nestorians Christians;<sup>9</sup> so Simeon referred to them simply as Ma'addites. The Ma'addites in the *Chronicle of Michael the Syrian* were Monophysites, and this raises the question of Simeon's silence on their Christianity again. Ma'add, however, was a very large confederation occupying vast tracts of Arabia, eastern as well as western. The eastern part represented by the Ma'addites of Simeon naturally were amenable to Nestorian influence emanating from the Land of the Two Rivers. Those in western Arabia, known to Procopius,<sup>10</sup> were close to the Ghassānids and to South Arabia, which after the fall of the last Ḥimyarite king, Yūsuf, ca. 520, became a Monophysite country. The Ma'addites of the *Chronicle* most probably derived their descent from the Monophysite branch of the confederation. And it is not impossible that the Nestorian Ma'addites converted to Monophysitism at some point in the Islamic period.<sup>11</sup>

The survival of the term Ma'add until at least the tenth century and of the group in the new world of Islam suggests that the Ma'add took their Christianity seriously and refused to convert until very late times. Their retention of the name is also remarkable, in spite of the fact that it must have ceased to have any political or military significance with the rise of Islam. Noteworthy also is their association with the "Nédjrayê," which most probably should be read Nedjranāyē, the Najrānites. These were the relatives of the martyrs of Najrān; hence their allegiance to Christianity remained strong after they were evacuated from Najrān during the caliphate of Omar. But their ranks must have thinned in the diaspora, and this presumption is suggested by the episcopate of John over *both* of them jointly.

## APPENDIX V

### B. Rubin on the Battle of Callinicum

B. Rubin's discussion of the battle of Callinicum is the most detailed and competent of all accounts of the battle in recent scholarship.<sup>1</sup> He has taken into account the conclusions of the present writer on the battle as expressed in "Procopius and Arethas"

<sup>9</sup> On the bitter enmity between the two and Simeon's involvement in it, see *Martyrs*, 171–72, and 172 note 1. Simeon included the Nestorians in his treatises and proceedings against the heretics; *ibid.*, 167. His silence on Ma'add's Christianity thus becomes understandable, especially after their outburst when they taunted his party about "their Christ," naturally interpreted by Simeon as an obvious gloating over the expulsion of the Monophysites from Byzantine territory after the accession of Justin and from Ḥira (whither they had fled) by the Nestorians.

<sup>10</sup> See *History*, I.xix.14 and xx.9.

<sup>11</sup> On Ma'add see also *BAFIC*, 383–84.

<sup>1</sup> See *Zeitalter Justinians*, 284–91.



and has drawn upon them. One of his notes is especially important as it discusses the involvement of the Arabs in the battle.

I. Kawar (Procopius and Arethas, Byzantin. Zeitschr. 50 (1957) 40) hält vielleicht nicht mit Unrecht den „Verrat“ des Ḥārīt für einen Bestandteil der Versuche Prokops Belisar vom Odium der Niederlage von Kallinikos zu entlasten. Ob es sich bei den von Malalas überlieferten Verdachtsmomenten gegenüber den arabischen Unterführern (Phylarchen) um Insubordination oder Verabredung handelt, wird sich kaum klären lassen. Doch ist bei den Sarazenen verdächtig oft die Rede davon, daß sie bei Auseinandersetzungen verhalten kämpfen, um sich dem Sieger beim Plündern anzuschließen. Wenn Kawar von moralischer und militärischer Ehre der arabischen Satelliten spricht, glaube ich nicht daran, daß diese Begriffe sich bei den Großmächten und ihren arabischen Vasallen deckten. Was die öffentliche Meinung von Byzanz und Persien als „Verrat“ bewertete, kann aus arabischer Sicht als freieres Lebensgesetz und Vorahnung künftigen Aufbruchs verstanden werden. Kawar betont S. 54 mit Recht Ḥārīt eifriges (monophysitisches) Christentum. Ob aber angesichts des religionspolitischen Doppelspiels zwischen Iustinian und Theodora die Kampfstellung gegenüber Feuerreligion und Heiden dadurch verstärkt wurde, steht dahin, zumal in Persien und Ḥira mit bedeutenden christlichen Bevölkerungsanteilen zu rechnen ist. Die Situation wird dadurch noch undurchschaubarer.

Zur Taktik verweist Kawar (S.55) mit Recht auf drei Gesichtspunkte, die für Ḥārīt und gegen Prokops *προδοσία*-Verdacht sprechen: Kallinikos war die erste reguläre Feldschlacht Ḥārīt überhaupt, ferner sein erstes Treffen seit Ernennung zum „König“, so daß zur Eifersucht und Insubordination der Phylarchen noch eine gewisse Unerfahrenheit kommt. Immerhin zeigt die Tatsache, daß Araber gegen Araber standen, zur Genüge, daß die Oberkommandierenden beider Heere die nationalen Kampfmethoden der Sarazenen in Rechnung stellten.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of a substantial measure of agreement between the author and the present writer, some statements in this note call for comment.

1. The disjunction expressed in “um Insubordination oder Verabredung” has been examined above in the section on Callinicum. There it is argued that *prodosia* is out of the question<sup>3</sup> but that insubordination was a real possibility. The disjunction should be expressed in terms of insubordination, lack of enthusiasm, or even panic.

2. The statement that the Saracens often went over to the victor in order to collect booty and to plunder is not documented and awaits validation; the facts of Arab military history in pre-Islamic times do not bear this out. There may have been

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 499–500 note 878.

<sup>3</sup> Rubin himself was inclined to dismiss the charge of *prodosia* in the body of the text of his chapter on Callinicum and conceive of the flight of some of the Arabs as lack of interest: “wenn dies vielfach als Verrat ausgelegt wurde, so mag darin richtig sein, daß es den Sarazenen in geringerem Masse um den Sieg ging als Römern und Persern”; *ibid.*, 287.

sporadic and isolated instances among the Peninsular Arabs, but none is recorded for the *foederati*.<sup>4</sup>

3. That moral and military honor or reputation meant one thing to the Arabs and another to the two great powers cannot be accepted. The Arabs involved in the battle of Callinicum were Byzantine *foederati* who had been Christianized and Romanized to a great extent, and they shared with the Byzantine regular army their ideals just as militarily they were fighting in the Roman manner.

4. For the same reason it is impossible to accept the view that they would have behaved in the battle in obedience or in response to a "freieres Lebewesetz" and that this was "Vorahnung künftigen Aufbruchs." These were disciplined troops and not unruly pastoralists in the Arabian Peninsula of whom such a behavior could be predicated. As to its being a presentiment of the future Arab Conquests, this is completely wide of the mark. The Arab Conquests are utterly irrelevant to any discussion of the battle of Callinicum.<sup>5</sup>

5. That the *foederati*, especially the Ghassānids, were inspired by religious zeal in their fight with fire-worshippers and heathens is a fact that cannot be denied and would not have been affected by theological differences with Chalcedonians nor by the sympathies of the Christian population in Persia and Hīra. The Christian element in the Sasanid-Lakhmid armies was small, and in any case it never prevented Muḍīr from committing barbarities against the Byzantine Christian Orient, while this very Christian element rebelled against Muḍīr himself when the latter was prepared to engage in anti-Christian activities.<sup>6</sup>

## B

### The Inter-War Period (532–539)

The eight years that elapsed from the Endless Peace of 532 to the outbreak of the second Persian war in 540 were a period of relative peace on the eastern front; hence there are not many references to the *foederati* and the Arabs in the principal narrative sources. There are, however, a few in the legislative acts of the period, as well as others in Choricus of Gaza and Mar-

<sup>4</sup> And in any case it is irrelevant to the discussion of the Arab behavior at Callinicum since it is not mentioned or recorded in any of the sources. Besides, it is inconceivable in a pitched battle, such as Callinicum, in which the Arabs on the side of Byzantium fought as seasoned *foederati*, who were paid the *annona* by the empire.

<sup>5</sup> What is not irrelevant is the Byzantine-Ghassānid conflict late in the century during the reign of Muḍīr and Nu'mān. I take it that *Aufbruch* refers to the Arab Islamic movement in the 7th century.

<sup>6</sup> For this see the present writer in "Conference of Ramla," 199 and note 19. For the Christian chief who acted in a similar fashion against his father, Nu'mān, see above, 18. The sympathies of the Christians of Persia, in spite of theological differences with Chalcedonian Byzantium, were with the Christian Roman Empire and not with the fire-worshippers who often persecuted them. On the attitude of Christians in Persia toward the Roman Empire, see Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian* (Oxford, 1988), 214.

cellinus Comes. By far the more important are those in the legislative acts, which repay careful study.

In the mid-530s Justinian initiated a wide-ranging program of administrative reforms in the eastern provinces, which included Arabia, Phoenicia Libanensis, and Palestine, the very provinces in which the phylarchal and federate system obtained. A few years before, in 528 and 529, the emperor completely overhauled this system when he both settled the problem posed by the death of Arethas the Kindite and extended the extraordinary *Basileia* to Arethas the Ghassānid. As these settlements were effected during the course of the first Persian war, it is important to follow the fortunes of the phylarchal system in the period of peace that followed and see how this system worked, now that it was controlled by the archphylarchate and the *Basileia* of Arethas the Ghassānid. One should also investigate how it was affected by Justinian's administrative reforms, especially the redefinition of the relationship of the civil to the military authority in each province.

The administrative reforms that affected the phylarchal and federate system are found in two novels and one edict: Novel 102 pertained to Arabia, Edict 4 to Phoenicia Libanensis, and Novel 103 to Palestine. They will be examined in this order.<sup>1</sup> In addition to references to the Arabs in Choricus of Gaza and Marcellinus Comes, there is possible reference to them in Procopius' account of the Vandal war.

### I. THE VANDAL WAR, 533–534

In his narrative of the expedition that Justinian mounted against the Vandals in Africa, Procopius gives a detailed account of its composition, listing the commanders of its various components: *foederati* and regular troops (*stratiōtai*), both cavalry and infantry.<sup>2</sup> Among the last he mentions a certain Zaidos,<sup>3</sup> raising the question of whether there was some Arab participation in the Vandal war. Although such participation may remain a somewhat remote possibility, one may adduce the following. First, the name Ζαΐδος sounds like an Arabic name, either Sa'īd or Zayd with a Greek suffix terminating in sigma, as normally found. Also, in enumerating the ethnic origins of the various commanders, Procopius points out that Solomon, the commander of the *foederati*, came from Oriens, from a place not far from Daras in Meso-

<sup>1</sup> The administrative reforms in these three provinces have received comparatively little attention. Bury concentrates mostly on other provinces, consigning these to a footnote (*HLRE*, II, 341 note 3); Stein is also more concerned with Armenia, Asia Minor, and Egypt (*HBE*, II, 470–80); so too Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 319–22. M. Maas treats them more expansively, though his study, "Roman History and Christian Ideology in Justinianic Reform Legislation," *DOP* 40 (1986), 17–31, is done from a different perspective.

<sup>2</sup> *History*, III.xi.1–11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III.xi.9.

potamia; that Aigan, the commander of the cavalry, was one of the Huns or Massagetae; and "the rest almost all were inhabitants of the land of Thrace."<sup>4</sup> His use of "almost" (σχεδόν) suggests that one or more of the many referred to as "the rest" were non-Thracians, a category that possibly includes Zaidos.<sup>5</sup>

In the same section in which he describes the composition of the expedition, Procopius includes the well-known paragraph on the *foederati* and how the term changed in his times from what it had signified in the preceding period.<sup>6</sup> Yet the use of the term, so appropriate to Byzantium's Arab allies in the East, the Ghassānids, could suggest that, within the ambiguity in which Procopius sometimes couches his terms and concepts, Arab federate participation in the Vandal war may not be entirely ruled out. The emperor was aware of how Arethas and his Ghassānids had distinguished themselves in the first Persian war. Since the Persian front became non-operational and the eastern front was quiet after the peace of 532, it is not unlikely that Justinian saw fit to send a Ghassānid or an Arab contingent to fight the Vandals with Belisarius in Africa. The *magister militum* would have been aware of the military worth of the Ghassānids, who, because of their stand at Callinicum in 531,<sup>7</sup> probably covered his own retreat after the disastrous turn in the course of the battle. One may compare the later instance, Procopius' account of the dispatch of Belisarius from the eastern front in 544 to fight the Goths under Totila. Justinian decided to take Belisarius away from the eastern front in spite of the fact that "the Persians were pressing hard."<sup>8</sup> Belisarius proceeded to Italy with a small army, "for it was impossible for him to detach his own troops from the army in Persia."<sup>9</sup> Thus the thought of detaching some troops from the eastern front did cross Belisarius' mind, but he was prevented from doing so since that front was still operational and "the Persians were pressing hard." However, the situation was entirely different after the signing of the peace treaty with Persia in 532. It is thus conceivable that Belisarius could detach some troops from the army of the Orient, with the choice of a Ghassānid contingent being a distinct possibility. It is also noteworthy that when Justinian put Belisarius in command of the expedition against the Vandals he made him στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ, an unusual command with plenipotentiary powers.<sup>10</sup> What is more, in speaking of Belisarius' new command

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., III.xi.10.

<sup>5</sup> So in *PLRE*, III s.v. Zaidus. In Procopius, Zaidos appears as a commander of infantry.

<sup>6</sup> *History*, III.xi.3-4.

<sup>7</sup> See the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," 55-56, and cf. above on Callinicum, 136-39.

<sup>8</sup> *History*, VII.ix.23.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., VII.x.1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., III.xi.18-21. The supreme command conferred on Belisarius speaks of him as being given the powers of a king, recalling the position to which Justinian had raised Arethas three years earlier.

in Africa after his *magisterium* in Oriens, Procopius says in the same passage: "And he was followed by many spearmen and many guards as well, men who were capable warriors and thoroughly experienced in the dangers of fighting."<sup>11</sup> The reference, it is true, is to spearmen (δορύφοροι) and guards (ὑπασπισταί), terms that do not designate the Ghassānids, but since it was Procopius writing, omission of reference to the latter was not unusual.<sup>12</sup> What is important is the fact that troops from Oriens were detached to serve in the Vandal campaign.

Precedents are not lacking for the participation of Arab troops stationed in Oriens in military operations in the Roman Occident. In the fifth century a *tagma* or *ala* of Arab soldiers from the Ala Tertia Arabum stationed at Thenemuthi in Egypt was dispatched to fight in Cyrenaica.<sup>13</sup> Possibly a Salīhid contingent was sent by Leo to participate in his disastrous Vandal expedition.<sup>14</sup> The Ghassānids (if indeed they were dispatched) enlisted by Justinian to fight in his Vandal war would have repeated what the fifth-century Salīhid *foederati* had done in similar circumstances, that is, when the Persian front was not in operation. If the Ghassānids or some other Arab federate groups did participate in the expedition against the Vandals, Procopius, who had just finished giving an account of the Ghassānid *foederati* as treacherous allies in the first Persian war, would not have cared to mention the fact.

## II. CHORICIUS OF GAZA

Two encomia by Choricus<sup>15</sup> are important for the history of Palestine in the 530s: the encomium on Aratius and Stephanus,<sup>16</sup> the military and civil governors of Palestine in 535/36; and that on Summus,<sup>17</sup> the *dux* of Palestine, dated between 535/36 and 540. They are especially important as they throw light on Arab-Byzantine relations in this decade and in this region, the southern part of Oriens. Unfortunately, as the rhetor of Gaza was not particularly interested in history, his references to the Arabs often do not specify names, unlike those of his Palestine contemporary Cyril of Scythopolis, who is onomastically and toponymically most precise and informative on the Arabs.

<sup>11</sup> *History*, III.xi.19.

<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy that Belisarius put great confidence in Arethas during the Assyrian campaign of 541, so that the 1,200 ὑπασπισταί were to obey Arethas in everything they did; *ibid.*, III.xix.15.

<sup>13</sup> *BAFIC*, 9–12.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 91–96.

<sup>15</sup> Ed. R. Förster and E. Richsteig, *Choricii Gazaei Opera* (Leipzig, 1929) (hereafter *Opera*). For a recent translation and commentary with up-to-date bibliography, see F. K. Litsas, "Choricus of Gaza: An Approach to His Work," *diss.* (University of Chicago, 1980).

<sup>16</sup> *Opera*, 48–69.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 69–81.

*Laudatio Aratii et Stephani*

The *dux* Aratius was a Persarmenian who with his brother Narses had defeated Sittas and Belisarius when the pair invaded Persarmenia in 527/28. Both later defected to the Byzantines and saw service in the wars of Justinian's reign. While the oration is mostly on Stephanus, whom Novel 103 on Palestine mentions,<sup>18</sup> it is the sporadic references to Aratius that are important for Arab-Byzantine relations in the early years of the reign of Justinian. These references treat four episodes in which Aratius was involved during his ducate over Palestine in these two years.

Sections 20–26 speak of a fortress held by the barbarians which was almost impregnable since it had plenty of provisions and a spring of water, enabling it to resist a protracted siege. Though many before Aratius had attempted to capture it but failed, Aratius succeeded. "Barbarians" along the boundaries of Palestine could only have been Saracens, non-federates often referred to in the sources as "barbarians." From the description of the fortress (φρούριον) it can be inferred that it was *extra limitem*, somewhere in Hijāz, since it is inconceivable that a group of Saracens would have had a fortress *intra limitem* that had long resisted Roman assaults.<sup>19</sup> In spite of the lack of toponymic precision that characterizes Choricus' style, this is an important reference. The descriptive phrase reads: φρούριον ἦν χρυσοῦ μέταλλα πρόσ-οδον φέρων.<sup>20</sup> However, it is not clear what exactly this means.<sup>21</sup> In general one may conclude that this was a region with mines (χρυσοῦ μέταλλα) and that the fortress guarded the approach to them.<sup>22</sup> This clearly locates the fortress in Hijāz, known for its gold mines.<sup>23</sup>

Section 28 of the oration speaks of clearing the route that was impassable because of the threat of Saracens. Aratius is praised for having cleared it not

<sup>18</sup> On this novel see below, 200–206.

<sup>19</sup> The possession of a fortress by the Saracens of Arabia should not be surprising. Hijāz had witnessed supremacies, Nabataean and Roman, that had built structures and abandoned them after their fall or withdrawal; these could easily have been occupied by the pastoralists of the region.

<sup>20</sup> *Opera*, p. 54, lines 6–7.

<sup>21</sup> Litsas translated: "There was a fortress the main income of which was gold" ("Choricus," 160). More likely is: "There was a fortress guarding the approach to the gold mines."

<sup>22</sup> On Byzantine gold mines see S. Vryonis, "The Question of the Byzantine Mines," *Speculum* 37 (1962), 1–17. Before the conclusion of the Eternal Peace, Byzantium had acquired the gold mine of Pharangium in Persarmenia, where Aratius had come from; see Procopius, *History*, I.xv. 18, 28.

<sup>23</sup> On Hijāz as a region of gold mines, see Hamdānī, *Kitāb al-Gauharatāin. Das Buch von den beiden Edelmetallen, Gold und Silber*, ed. and trans. C. Toll (Uppsala, 1968), 137, 141. More specific to the question of possible federate involvement, e.g., Ma'din banī-Sulaym, "the mine of the tribe of Sulaym," and Ma'din Fārān, see *ibid.*, 141. For Ma'din al-Mundīr see BASIC II. Cf. also D. M. Dunlop, "Sources of Gold and Silver in Islam according to Hamdānī," *Studia Islamica* 8 (1957), 29–49.



by force of arms but by threats, and with fewer than twenty soldiers. It is not clear where this route lay, whether inside or outside the province: probably the former, which had a pocket of hostile Saracens menacing passage over it, near Gaza or Caesarea. These are likely to have been local Saracens.<sup>24</sup> Also, sections 33–34 speak of Aratius' having chastised a number of Saracens in Egypt who had attacked some of its cities.<sup>25</sup>

Sections 67–78 describe events on the island of Iotabe and the Arabian mainland across the Gulf of Eilat. An unidentified group, referred to by the phrase ἀνόσιον ἔθνος,<sup>26</sup> lived on the island and had a fortress on the mainland. Choricus describes Iotabe as an important station for cargoes coming from India and for collecting taxes on ships that put in there. The unidentified people<sup>27</sup> attacked the island, destroying the Church of the Mother of God, and thus usurped the taxes belonging to the emperor.<sup>28</sup> Choricus then describes how Aratius stormed the fortress, captured it, enslaved those of the defenders who survived the assault, and then left the fortress in the hands of "trustworthy men" (ἀνδράσι πιστοῖς). In this way the island's revenues returned to the emperor.<sup>29</sup>

Although these operations took place in Palaestina Tertia, where the jurisdiction of Abū Karib the Ghassānid lay, there is no reference to him

<sup>24</sup> It is quite unlikely that these were the Saracens of Mundir the Lakhmid, as suggested by Litsas, "Choricus," 259–60. The sources do not indicate that Mundir's forces penetrated as far as the distant Caesarea or Gaza in the 530s. No Lakhmid Saracens are attested as having collaborated with the rebellious Samaritans back in 529.

<sup>25</sup> It was not unprecedented for troops from Palaestina Tertia to operate in Egypt, as in the case of the Pharanes; see *BAFIC*, 94.

<sup>26</sup> *Opera*, p. 65, line 24. As the phrase embodies some kind of racial slur, Abel and Stein (cf. below, note 27) identified the group as Jews, making the phrase an anti-Semitic sentiment like that expressed by Synesius (cf. *BAFIC*, 14 note 48).

<sup>27</sup> Stein (*HBE*, II, 300 and note 1), following Abel, thought the phrase meant Jews, consonant with the Procopius passage stating that Jews had lived on the island of Iotabe from time immemorial but had lost their status as an autonomous community in the reign of Justinian (*History*, I.xix.4). Procopius is silent on Aratius' achievement in Iotabe, treated in detail by Choricus. Procopius may have been ill-disposed toward the Armenian; during the Gothic war he and his brother Narses appear to dislike Belisarius, Procopius' hero (*History*, VI.xviii.6–12).

<sup>28</sup> It is not clear how the Jews captured Iotabe from the Byzantines; possibly during the first Persian war, as the Jewish community always sided with Persia against Byzantium. The occupation of the island may thus be linked to that war and to Ṭabari's statement that around 530 the Persians extended Mundir's power so as to include Ḥijāz. See *BASIC* II.

<sup>29</sup> *Opera*, p. 67, line 18. The location of the island of Iotabe has long been a problem. Abel ("L'île de Jotabè," *RB* 47 [1938], 510–38) identified it with Tiran, which has generally been accepted. However, Israeli archaeologists have recently doubted this identification; see B. Rothenberg, *God's Wilderness: Discoveries in Sinai* (London, 1961), 162. Tiran, though, does correspond best to Procopius' description. For his part Rothenberg suggests the biblical Jothabathah, identified by him with Taba; *ibid.*, 164. A Jewish-Aramaic inscription in Nabataean script has been discovered, reading "Akrabos son of Samuel of Maqna, of son-of-Sadia of Jotabe"; *ibid.*, 181, no. 84. The third "of" in the English version seems odd.

either here or in the previous account in sections 20–26. It is difficult to believe that the energetic phylarch did not participate in these events. Although Choricus, far from the scene in Gaza, may not have known about him, it is more likely that, as a rhetorician mainly interested in praising Aratius, he would have concentrated on his subject, not including distracting references to an Arab phylarch perhaps at the expense of the *dux's* achievement. The possible participation of Abū Karib is supported by the fact that the Ghassānids had already been involved in Iotabe under Leo I in the fifth century, when the emperor confirmed Amorkesos in his possession of the island. Around 500 the *dux* of Palestine, Romanus,<sup>30</sup> freed the island from its Arab rulers, but soon after the *foedus* with Ghassān was concluded, making the Ghassānids friends and allies of the Byzantines, while this relationship was elevated with Justinian's extending the extraordinary *Basileia* to Arethas around 530. Thus the Ghassānids emerged as Byzantium's most trusted and powerful allies both within Oriens and in northern Ḥijāz. It is therefore quite likely that the "trustworthy men" to whom Aratius committed the affairs of the island and the collection of taxes were the Ghassānid Arabs of Abū Karib,<sup>31</sup> with the latter thus resuming Amorkesos' earlier role.

From Aratius' activities as described in this oration one may conclude that the *dux* of Palestine held a strategic position in Oriens that enabled him to operate outside the boundaries of the province, in both Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. Also, one sees that the activities of the *dux* with respect to the economic history of the period were the perfect follow-up to Julian's effort among the Southern Semites to divert trade from the eastern to the western route, in both the Red Sea region and western Arabia. Aratius' activity is related to the first in Iotabe and to the second in Ḥijāz.

#### *Laudatio Summi*

As important as the *Laudatio Aratii et Stephani* is that on Summus,<sup>32</sup> another *dux* of Palestine in the 530s, in fact twice *dux*. He was the brother of Julian, Justinian's ambassador to the Southern Semites; both clearly bore Roman names. After distinguishing himself in relief work in Antioch in the wake of the earthquake in the late 520s, he was appointed by Justinian to the Palestinian command, the *ducatus*, in which he twice served.<sup>33</sup> In the decade of

<sup>30</sup> On these two see *BAFIC*, 82–91, 125–27.

<sup>31</sup> While the Ghassānids were primarily a military organization in Byzantium's service, they also performed economy-related functions such as guarding trade routes from pastoralist raids. If Aratius entrusted them with levying the taxes of Iotabe, this too was a non-military duty in the service of the empire.

<sup>32</sup> *Opera*, 69–81.

<sup>33</sup> For Summus see *PLRE*, II, 1038–39.

the 530s Summus and the Arabs crossed paths often, and on these encounters the *Laudatio* is most informative.

His first term as *dux* of Palestine was the two years 531–532, when he contributed to the pacification of the province in the aftermath of the Samaritan revolt of 529. He must have been aware of the contribution of the Ghassānid *foederati* to the suppression of that revolt. However, it is after recounting Summus' achievements in pacifying Palestine that Choricus begins to tell of his encounters with the Arabs.

Sections 16–19 of the encomium speak of the quarrel that broke out between two federate Arab chiefs and reached dangerous dimensions; of the failure of efforts to make peace between them; of the imminence of even an armed conflict; and of Summus' skill in reconciling the two not by force of arms but by bringing them together and scolding them bitterly, an achievement that became legendary in the province. In his description of this episode Choricus writes as a classicizing rhetorician who does not wish to use early Byzantine terminology in speaking of the Arab chiefs. It is quite clear that it was Byzantium's Arab federates in the region who were involved,<sup>34</sup> whose chiefs were called phylarchs (φύλαρχοι), established by centuries of usage. Instead Choricus uses the term τὰ κεφάλαια, presumably to avoid using a word from administrative terminology in a literary work (and to avoid confusion with figures from classical antiquity). In both *laudationes* he avoids using technical terms of his own day, resorting rather to literary locutions.

When in section 17 he describes the outbreak of the quarrel between the two chiefs, he speaks of it as the breaking of the σπονδαί,<sup>35</sup> a term usually used for the treaty between a federate Arab tribe and Byzantium, but here used as if it were a state obtaining between two warring Arab tribal groups. If this is accurate, it implies that the tribes belonging to various affiliations in Oriens had among them *foedera* within the framework of the Byzantine phylarchal system, as well as *foedera* with Byzantium. This also makes it certain that the two chiefs involved in the quarrel belonged to different tribal affiliations. If so, this is a valuable datum on the relationship that obtained among the various federate tribal groups within Oriens and an indication of the difficulties the Ghassānid supreme phylarch had in keeping his subordinate phylarchs on the leash. The existence of these inter-tribal *foedera* suggests that they could be broken, and the phylarchs could war against each other, even on Byzantine territory, without breaking the *foedus* they had with Byzantium.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> This is clear from the phrase τῶν ἡμετέρων φυλῶν τὰ κεφάλαια (p. 73, line 23). Thus the two chiefs could not have been the Lakhmid and Ghassānid phylarchs mentioned in Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.46; cf. Litsas, "Choricus," 273 note 13.

<sup>35</sup> Confirmed later in the section by the use of the term συνθηκαί; *Opera*, p. 74, lines 2, 7 (for both).

<sup>36</sup> Possibly the treaty of peace between the two federate groups might have been struck

This episode reflects the prestige of the Roman *dux* and his superior position vis-à-vis the Arab phylarchs. Although the chiefs involved were probably hardened warriors, the Roman *dux* was able to bring them together, administer a scolding, and finally reconcile them. This confirms that in the order of precedence within the province the *dux* came before the phylarch, even if the latter were the supreme phylarch in Oriens, as one of these two likely was.

Who were these two chiefs that our author does not name?<sup>37</sup> We know of many names: Arethas and Abū Karib, Qays the Kindite, and Terebon II of the Parembole. While any of these four could have been involved in the quarrel, the chances are that the two were Arethas the Ghassānid and Qays the Kindite. First, the breaking of a *foedus* in this strife implies that the two belonged to different tribal affiliations: this narrows the choice to a Ghassānid and a Kindite, since the phylarchs of the Parembole were by this time too weak to stand against the powerful Kindite chief in Palestine. Of the two Ghassānids, Abū Karib was stationed too far from Qays and had a defined phylarchal jurisdiction in Palaestina Tertia, unlike his brother. This leaves the Kindite Qays and the Ghassānid Arethas. One may compare the episode in the 550s recorded by Cyril of Scythopolis, nearly a duplicate of the one being considered here. Strife between two Arab phylarchs spread destruction in Palaestina Prima.<sup>38</sup> Cyril names the later two, Arethas and Aswad, a Ghassānid and a Kindite. One may view the earlier of these parallel episodes as a precedent to the later.

Federate history of the period affords a background for the identification. Around 530 Justinian made the Ghassānid phylarch of the Provincia Arabia the supreme phylarch and king of most of the Arab federates in Oriens, a man who was also phylarch of Palaestina Secunda and had close connections with Palestine, his brother Abū Karib being phylarch of Tertia. Furthermore, he had taken part in quelling the Samaritan revolt in the province. Also around 530, Qays the Kindite was given an extraordinary *hēgemonia* in two or possibly all of the three Palestines. These appointments created overlapping phylarchal jurisdictions and paved the way for conflict, here one between the *archi-phylarchia* and the *hēgemonia*.

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before they became federates of Byzantium. Such inter-tribal treaties, such as that between Kalb and Tamīm, are known (*BAFIC*, 432). Kinda and Ghassān may have had such a treaty before they both made one with Byzantium in 502.

<sup>37</sup> As Litsas put it ("Choricus," 66), the rhetor "does not write history nor does he care to transmit to us historical information." As this *laudatio* is in praise of Summus, the writer does not wish to distract attention from his *laudandus* by mentioning other names, such as those of the Arab phylarchs, which also would have looked strange in Greek; compare the way Strabo, faced with the same problem of Arabic names, simply omitted them (*Geography*, XVI.4.18). Of course the modern historian feels this as a loss of information.

<sup>38</sup> See below, 251–55.

In section 17 Choricus mentions earlier unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the two chiefs. This most probably refers to the previous *dux*, Eirenaios,<sup>39</sup> appointed in 530, and means that the strife had broken out before Summus began as *dux* in 531, probably just after the appointment of Qays. That it broke out again some ten years later<sup>40</sup> between Arethas and presumably Qays' Kindite successor in the *bēgemonia* gives a glimpse of inter-phylarchal tensions within Oriens, occasioned by Arethas' appointment.

Section 20 speaks of a military operation against some nomads described as νομάδων γὰρ ἄλλοφύλων τοὺς ἡμετέρους καταθεόντων.<sup>41</sup> alien nomads or tribes not allied with Byzantium who had attacked some allies. After they captured booty and entrenched themselves in a stronghold on a craggy hill, Summus conducted a campaign against them and defeated them. Who these tribes were, and where in Palestine or its vicinity this episode took place, is not clear. They are unlikely to have been Persian Arabs,<sup>42</sup> since they would have retreated immediately after capturing booty. They must have been either some non-allied Arab tribe that penetrated into Palestine, not unlike those that harassed the monasteries in the Desert of Juda, or some tribe in northern Ḥijāz not far from the Roman *limes* in Palaestina Tertia. The former is more likely to be the case, since Abū Karib would have attended to such attacks if they had occurred in northern Ḥijāz. Sections 21–22 speak of another attack on some pastoralists, presumably allied with Byzantium in Egypt. Summus hurried from Palestine to their aid, enslaved many of the aggressors, and saved the friendly pastoralists from enslavement. This is an even more important episode, recalling the expedition of another *dux* of Palestine, Aratius, into Egypt, and confirming the close connection between Palaestina Tertia and the eastern Egyptian desert (east of the Delta). These must of course have been Arab pastoralists, allied to Byzantium or not. Notably, Choricus does not use the term "Saracen" (Σαρακηνός) either here or in the story of the two chiefs, perhaps avoiding it as non-classical. Of the allied tribes in Egypt he uses ὁμόφυλοι,<sup>43</sup> rather than ἔνσπονδοι, as he had used ἄλλόφυλοι for non-allied, hostile tribes.<sup>44</sup>

Sections 25–28 comprise the most important reference to the Arabs in this encomium. The text falls into two parts, the first important for the cultural history of the Rhomaic Arabs, and the second for the financial prob-

<sup>39</sup> On Eirenaios' ducate preceding Summus' first term in that office, see *PLRE*, II, 625–26, s.v. Irenaeus 7.

<sup>40</sup> In the episode that took place in the 540s, Cyril of Scythopolis does not mention Summus as arbiter, perhaps implying that he was dead by then.

<sup>41</sup> *Opera*, p. 75, line 2.

<sup>42</sup> Suggested by Litsas, "Choricus," 274 note 18.

<sup>43</sup> *Opera*, p. 75, line 21.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, line 2.

lems of the Provincia Arabia in the 530s. Section 25 speaks of a student of Choricus' from the Provincia Arabia, sent to the rhetor by Summus to study with him in Gaza. His father was very well known in the province (γνώρισμα μέγιστον ὁ πατήρ).<sup>45</sup> This student became Choricus' informant on Summus' fair distribution and reassessment of the taxes of Arabia. The first feature one notices about the passage is that Choricus the rhetorician, not interested in conveying historical information, does not give the names<sup>46</sup> of the student or his father. The way the rhetor describes the father as extremely well known<sup>47</sup> but does not give his name tantalizes the modern reader seeking to understand the onomasticon of the Rhomaic Arabs of the Provincia. One would like to know whether such people had retained Arab names, like 'Amr or Malik, or had assumed Graeco-Roman names. This section reveals the Rhomaic Arabs of this area as worthy descendants of the Nabataeans, interested not only in trade but also in Greek culture. The closest great center of rhetoric to the Provincia was in neighboring Palaestina Prima, in Gaza, and there the Arab youth was sent to study. He brings to mind some earlier antecedents, the third-century sophists from Petra, Arabs who assumed the Greek names of Heliodorus, Callinicus, and Genethlius, the last two of whom taught rhetoric in Athens.<sup>48</sup>

Sections 26–28 speak of Summus' achievement in reassessing the taxes of the Provincia. Here one notes two features. First, although the provincials of Arabia were Roman *cives* and had been for some three centuries since the edict of Caracalla, they are referred to in this text as "Arabs" (Ἄραβες), and even the Provincia is called "the land or country of the Arabs."<sup>49</sup> Second, Summus' moral virtues are remembered while he was in the process of this tax reassessment. Although some tried to bribe him, he remained incorruptible, a picture to compare with that Procopius drew of him with regard to his negotiations with the Lakhmid king Mundir just before the outbreak of the second Persian war.<sup>50</sup> Section 32 speaks of Summus' virtues, one of which was his readiness to seek good counsel, to confer with others, and to choose excellent advisors for reaching the right decision. Hence he employed the services of a prudent advisor (σύμβουλος) whom the rhetor describes in the Homeric phrase "clear-voiced orator of the Arabs" (λιγὸν Ἄράβων ἄγορητήν).<sup>51</sup> This reference oc-

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 76, lines 17–18.

<sup>46</sup> See above, note 37.

<sup>47</sup> The most famous Arab in the Provincia was Arethas the supreme phylarch, but it is doubtful that he would have sent his son to study rhetoric in Gaza. The man in question was probably a Rhomaic Arab.

<sup>48</sup> See *RA*, xxii note 9.

<sup>49</sup> *Opera*, p. 77, line 21. This recalls Justinian's novel on Arabia where the province is also called "the country of the Arabs"; see below, 196.

<sup>50</sup> See below, 253, 304.

<sup>51</sup> *Opera*, p. 79, lines 4–5.



curs toward the end of the encomium, in a section speaking of the *dux* in generalities but with no context to indicate why Choricus introduced this unnamed figure or when and where he functioned as Summus' *symbolos*. Fortunately, Choricus' penchant for classical allusion (in this case to Homer) makes it possible to identify the context more precisely.

On two occasions Summus might have invoked the aid of an Arab *symbolos*: in reconciling the phylarchs or in reassessing the Provincia's taxes. The Homeric phrase makes one opt for the former case. Choricus is adapting Homer's description of Nestor, λιγὺς Πυλίων ἀγορητής,<sup>52</sup> substituting Ἀράβων for Πυλίων.<sup>53</sup> In the *Iliad*, strife had broken out in the Greek camp between the two chieftains, Agamemnon and Achilles, and old Nestor tried to reconcile the two.<sup>54</sup> The parallel case of strife between two Arab chiefs leads one to conclude that it was on this occasion that Summus invoked the aid of an Arab *symbolos*. The two phylarchs were not Roman *cives* but Arab *foederati*, belonging to a world alien and not wholly intelligible to the Roman *dux*, who needed the counsel of one of their world to help effect the reconciliation, especially in view of the language problem. The phylarchs probably did not speak Greek or Latin, and a bilingual *symbolos* could interpret between them and Summus. This *symbolos* is described specifically as an Arab, in Choricus meaning an inhabitant of the Provincia Arabia—a Rhomaic Arab who was a Roman citizen and familiar with Latin and/or Greek. He could also have been an Arab from the Parebole in the Jordan Valley, who had been there long enough to become bi- or trilingual. The designation "clear-voiced orator" rings true in view of the tradition of oratory among the pre-Islamic Arabs and its significance in Arab public life, especially in composing tribal differences.

One may now make some final observations on Summus and on Choricus. As a soldier-diplomat in Oriens, Summus evidently knew the Arabs well, as Rhomaic Arabs, *cives*, as Roman *foederati*, as non-aligned pastoralists, and as Persian *foederati*. He knew them in Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, and Hīra (where he presumably met Mundir before the outbreak of the second Persian war). This is a measure of the high degree of professionalism Byzantine diplomacy reached. It employed officials who had acquired experi-

<sup>52</sup> *Iliad*, I.248 and IV.293.

<sup>53</sup> For metrical reasons; Σαρακηνῶν would not have scanned.

<sup>54</sup> In section 17, Choricus spoke of the two chiefs' military preparations, in particular of their having armed themselves as for a night battle (ὅσπερ ἐν νυκτομαχίᾳ). Litsas ("Choricus," 274 note 15) comments on the popularity of this phrase, deriving from Herodotus' account of the eclipse of 585 B.C. during the battle between the Lydians and the Medes, with the School of Gaza. Choricus' referent is not altogether clear; if a solar or lunar eclipse is implied, it could help to date the phylarchal encounter. An eclipse that took place between March 536 and June 537, during Summus' second ducate, would then determine the date: D. J. Schove, *Chronology of Eclipses and Comets A.D. 1-1000* (Dover, N.H., 1984), 95-97.

ence in dealing with a certain people in a certain region, in this case, Oriens. Apparently Summus attracted Justinian's attention by being a competent *Roman*, as had his brother Julian, who served on the embassy to the Southern Semites, was the emperor's private secretary (*a secretis*), and was sent on an embassy to Chosroes.<sup>55</sup> The family enterprise of Julian and Summus recalls that of the three generations of the Nonnosus family in Byzantium's service as diplomats to the Arabs.

Choricus' picture of Summus is that of a competent military commander and a devoted public servant who had had a good classical and Christian education; even allowing for rhetorical exaggeration, this picture contains a kernel of truth. Choricus thus corrects Procopius' picture of Summus: the historian from Caesarea, in his account of the *Strata* dispute, presents him as a warmonger<sup>56</sup> and a hard-headed negotiator. The encomium, on the other hand, depicts him as a diplomat who preferred words to arms. Procopius presents Summus on another occasion as trying to bribe Mundir the Lakhmid to ally himself with the Romans,<sup>57</sup> attempting to put Summus in an unfavorable light; the encomium shows Summus as incorruptible, as seen in the sections treating the tax reassessment. All Summus tried to do with Mundir was perhaps to use Justinian's "solidus diplomacy," and quite possibly Mundir misrepresented him to the Persian king in trying to protest his own loyalty. Choricus is thus a check on Procopius' blurred image of Summus.

Choricus' image of the Arabs is not a negative one, except understandably for the pastoralists who raid the Roman frontier. His perception of the Rhomaic Arabs is friendly: he speaks flatteringly of the *symbolos* who helped Summus reconcile the two chiefs, using a Homeric tag for him. Perhaps he was influenced by his Arab student. Gaza was not far from the urban Arab/Nabataean establishment of the Negev, and so his contact with the Rhomaic Arabs was with those sedentaries who had reached a high degree of cultural life. Perhaps he was also aware of the third-century Arab sophists from the Provincia, two of whom had taught his own subject, rhetoric, in Athens.<sup>58</sup>

The chronology of Summus' two ducates in Palestine is not easy to determine with precision:<sup>59</sup> the first was in the early 530s, the second in the later

<sup>55</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.vii.15–16.

<sup>56</sup> On the *Strata* dispute and Summus see below, 209–16.

<sup>57</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.12–13.

<sup>58</sup> See above, note 48. Perhaps this is another bit of influence from his favorite author, Herodotus, who shows no anti-Arab prejudice; neither does Synesius of Cyrene (*BAFIC*, 12–14).

<sup>59</sup> In *PLRE*, II, 1039, Summus is said to have left his post as *dux* of Palestine in 534, "when it was occupied by Arator." Arator must be a misprint for Aratius since no Arator is known to have been *dux* in Palestine. In *PLRE*, III, 103, the beginning of Aratius' ducate in Palestine is given as 535. It is not clear which volume of *PLRE* should be followed, but the

part of that decade. This chronology is important for the administrative history of the three Palestines and for Arab-Byzantine relations. One must combine Choricus' prosopographical data with those from Cyril of Scythopolis and Procopius. Choricus relates that he held command twice<sup>60</sup> and turned it over to a successor,<sup>61</sup> thus indicating that his command in that province was not held concurrently with some other command, a matter of importance with regard to Novel 103 on Palestine. However, the rhetor does not assign Summus' deeds to one or the other of the two ducates, which might have helped to date them.

According to Cyril, Summus was involved in the building of a fort near the monasteries built by St. Sabas in the Desert of Juda, to protect them from Saracen raids. This dates Summus' first term as *dux* of Palestine surely to 531/32, and possibly somewhat before and after.<sup>62</sup> Exactly when he ceased to hold this office is not clear; he had done so by 534 when Aratius was *dux*. Since Summus must still have been *dux* just after 5 December 532, the date of Sabas' death,<sup>63</sup> he probably continued as such for the beginning of 533. That he did not hold a command concurrently with Aratius is clear from Choricus, who speaks of his turning over the command of Palestine to his successor.<sup>64</sup> Since Novel 103 designates Aratius as *dux* of Palestine in May 536, Aratius' ducate may be dated to 534–536, possibly extending to 537 when Summus probably began his second ducate. This second term may be dated to 537/38, possibly until 539, depending on interpretation of the *Strata* dispute passage in Procopius. That dispute probably took place in 539, since it was one of the immediate antecedents of the outbreak of the second Persian war in 540. Summus arbitrated the dispute with Strategius, when he was probably not still *dux* but had left that post to take up the appointment as arbitrator.<sup>65</sup>

Summus' title and rank present problems. As *dux* of Palestine he must have had the rank of *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος), but one finds neither *dux* nor

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difference is slight and immaterial for the argument of this chapter; the end of Summus' ducate and the inception of Aratius' may be assigned to 534/35.

<sup>60</sup> *Opera*, p. 70, sec. 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73, sec. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Worked out from a month-by-month chronology of the last years of Sabas' life; *PLRE*, II, 1038, s.v. Summus.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> See above, note 61.

<sup>65</sup> In *PLRE*, II, 1039, the *Strata* dispute is assigned to his second ducate, 537/38. However, Choricus, who delivered his encomium during this period, is unaware of it, suggesting that when Summus arbitrated the dispute he was no longer *dux* of Palestine. Procopius suggests as much in the way he describes the arbitration episode. In speaking of Summus' Palestine posting, Procopius uses the perfect participle ἡγησάμενος (*History*, II.i.9), indicating that he "had commanded" (trans. Dewing; emphasis added) the troops there (cf. F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* [Berlin, 1931], III, 119ab).

*spectabilis* applied to him. Choricus uses three titles for him: *stratēlatēs* (στρατηλάτης, *magister militum*), *hēgemōn* (ἡγεμών), and *stratēgos* (στρατηγός); though the first and second are *hapax legomena* in Choricus,<sup>66</sup> the third is the most common, used throughout the encomium. Procopius uses no title for him, saying only that he commanded the troops in Palestine.<sup>67</sup> Cyril of Scythopolis refers to him as Σούμμω τῷ ἐνδοξοτάτῳ.<sup>68</sup> None of these sources styles him *dux*. His rank is regularly given as ἐνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*), raising a question about his title since this is not the rank corresponding to *dux*, namely, *spectabilis*. Our evidence, however, comes from literary sources, not documents that would have used the correct terms for title and rank. The striking regularity and frequency with which he is referred to as ἐνδοξότατος/*gloriosissimus* suggests that this was an honorific, like *stratēgos* and/or *stratēlatēs*. These two terms, used interchangeably in the Greek sources,<sup>69</sup> are applied to him at an earlier date, when he was at Antioch in the 520s, though not to identify him as an actual *magister militum* of this period at Antioch (they are well attested: e.g., in 526, when he was there, it was Hypatius<sup>70</sup>). It is thus quite possible that both *stratēgos* and *gloriosissimus* were honorific, accorded to this distinguished Roman public servant by an emperor who reposed trust in him and his brother Julian.

Novel 103 on Palestine was issued in May 536.<sup>71</sup> Chapter 3 of its text refers to τὸν ἐνδοξότατον στρατηγόν: was this Summus? It will be argued below that most probably this was Qays the Kindite. It could not have been Summus. First, he was no longer *dux* of Palestine, having handed the office over to Aratius in 534 and not resuming it until probably 537. This novel indicates that its orders had been issued in a pragmatic sanction promulgated earlier than May 536, bringing it closer to Aratius' ducate. Second, the novel gives prominence to the civil governor of the province, raising him to the rank of proconsul, while curtailing the powers of the military governor (the *dux*) and prohibiting him to encroach on the proconsul's authority and privileges, in the interest of the stability and prosperity of the province. Summus, however, as is clear from Choricus' encomium, was not a mere soldier but a

<sup>66</sup> For these two designations of Summus, see the title of the encomium and sec. 1; *Opera*, p. 69, line 14, and p. 70, line 1.

<sup>67</sup> See above, note 65.

<sup>68</sup> Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, p. 175, line 17. Though Summus appears a few times in Cyril's *Life of Sabas*, he is never referred to as *dux*. In 6th-century documentary papyri from Egypt the *dux* of the Thebaid is regularly styled ἐνδοξότατος; L. S. B. MacCoull, "Dioscorus and the Dukes," *Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines* 13 (1989), 29–39.

<sup>69</sup> R. Grosse, *Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Beginn der byzantinischen Themenverfassung* (Berlin, 1920), 183. 'Ενδοξότατος is used with *stratēlatēs* in 6th-century papyri; Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, III, 187b.

<sup>70</sup> *PLRE*, II, 1291.

<sup>71</sup> On this novel and references to the *stratēgos*, see below, 201–2.

capable civil administrator with laudable civic virtues, who contributed greatly to the peace of Palestine. The novel's restrictions on the powers of the military authority are inconsistent with what is known about Summus, and rather accord with the soldier Aratius. Finally, the *dux* is mentioned first and takes precedence over the *stratēgos* who is mentioned only once, giving the impression that the *dux* was much the more important. This does not accord with Summus' position and influence, not only in Palestine but also in Oriens. Justinian's novel would not have referred so dismissively to a Roman so well known to the emperor, in favor of someone who to Justinian was a turncoat from Persarmenia.

### III. THE SARACEN INVASION OF EUPHRATENSIS, 536

In 536 Euphratensis was invaded by some fifteen thousand Saracens. Because of a drought in the Arabian Peninsula they had sought pasturage in Persian/Lakhmid territory, but Mundir had denied it to them. Thus, under the command of their two chiefs, "Chabo et Hezido," they invaded the Byzantine province of Euphratensis. Its *dux*, Batzas, was able, through a combination of diplomacy and firmness, to neutralize the incursion peacefully, without resort to arms. The Latin chronicle of Marcellinus Comes relates: "Ipsa namque anno ob nimiam siccitatem pastura in Persida denegata circiter quindecim milia Saracenorum ab Alamundaro cum Chabo et Hezido fylarchis limitem Eufresiae ingressa, ubi Batzas dux eos partim blanditiis, partim districtione pacifica fovit et inhiantes bellare repressit."<sup>72</sup>

This passage raises many problems, the first of which is textual. Even before T. Mommsen's edition, A. von Gutschmid suggested another reading for "ab Alamundaro cum Chabo et Hezido." Using Scaliger, he wrote: "Die Worte lauten bei Scaliger, dessen Text ohne Vergleich besser ist als die, welche man gewöhnlich benutzt: 'ab Alamundaro et Coonchabo (d.i. Coon, Chabo), Hezido zilartis (d.i. phylarchis)': es handelt sich um das Uebertreten von 15000 Saracenen von den Unterthanen des al-Mundhir und anderer Phylarchen auf römisches Gebiet. In Coon erkenne ich Goon, d.i. al-Gaun; sowohl dieser Name als Jezid kommen wiederholt in der jüngeren Linie des Königshauses von Kinda vor, dem also wohl auch Ka'b angehört haben wird."<sup>73</sup> This reading cannot be accepted, on both philological and historical grounds. The syntax does not make sense: the clear meaning is that after the two chiefs

<sup>72</sup> *Marcellini Comitis Chronicae Additamentum*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH, *Chronica Minora* (Berlin, 1894), II, 105. Marcellinus Comes, the continuator of Jerome, carried his *Chronicle* to the year 518 and then added a supplement to 534; this episode, dating from 536, belongs to the second supplement, not written by Marcellinus. See *ODB*, II, 1296, and the work in progress of B. Croke.

<sup>73</sup> A. von Gutschmid, "Bemerkungen zu Tabari's Sasanidengeschichte, übersetzt von Th. Nöldeke," *ZDMG* 34 (1880), 721-48, quotation on p. 744.

were denied pasturage by Mundir they attacked Euphratensis (construing *denegata* with *ab Alamundaro*). Historically, this was the period of the peace after 532, and no Byzantine source noticed this incursion. Had it happened, Procopius would have had an example of Persian aggression in breaking the Endless Peace, as he did in the way he drew attention to the *Strata* dispute in 539. Finally, this reading presents Mundir, the Lakhmid, undertaking a military operation together with his inveterate enemies, the Kindites—highly unlikely. Mommsen's text must therefore stand.<sup>74</sup>

Marcellinus gives four personal names that need to be identified. There is no problem about Alamundarus (Mundir), nor about Batzas, the Byzantine *dux* of Euphratensis.<sup>75</sup> The chances are that the two Arab chiefs were Kindites. The invasion's being led by two chiefs, not one, suggests the dyarchy or dual chieftainship over the Kindites in the Arabian Peninsula, after Qays was transferred to Palestine. According to the terms of the *foedus*, Qays gave up his Arabian chieftainship and divided it between his two brothers, 'Amr and Yazid.<sup>76</sup> Yazid is found in the Marcellinus passage; presumably 'Amr was no longer co-chief, or had died, being succeeded by Ka'b. Is the term *fylarchis* used in the sense of an Arab *sayyid/shaykh* (chief) or in the technical Byzantine sense of an Arab chief in a treaty relationship with Byzantium? Probably the latter, since Nonnosus' account of Kindite-Byzantine relations clearly implies that Peninsular Kinda was still a federate of Byzantium. The two chiefs were thus Byzantine phylarchs, but *extra limitem*, in the Arabian Peninsula. This is also consonant with the fact that they attacked not Byzantine territory but that of the enemy, Lakhmid Persia. Only after Mundir turned them away did they seek greener grass in Byzantine territory, entering Euphratensis. Mundir probably advised them just to seek pasturage in view of the drought. As their own and their flocks' existence was at stake, they agreed to enter their ally's territory. That the *dux* was able to persuade them argues in the same direction: he probably reminded them that they were Byzantium's allies, who had been misled by the empire's enemy, Mundir, into invading.

It is rare for a Latin or Greek author to explain the motivation of a

<sup>74</sup> So accepted in *PLRE*, where Mundir's role in this episode, the turning away of the two chiefs from Lakhmid/Persian toward Byzantine territory, is correctly understood: *PLRE*, II, 42, s.v. Alamundarus 2. The alternative reading is unsatisfactory in other ways: *fylarchis* appears as *zilartis*; *Coonchabo* is an impossible compound in Arabic as a personal name. The identification of Chabo with the Persian *Ḳabus* is rightly rejected by Nöldeke and von Gutschmid; in this context it can only be an Arabic name, most probably Ka'b.

<sup>75</sup> I am grateful to J. R. Martindale for providing the typescript of the *PLRE* III entry on Batzas prior to its publication. He identifies Batzas I and Batzas II, holding that the second was sent to Italy in 537 with reinforcements for Belisarius, being thereby rewarded for his success in Euphratensis with promotion to the illustre and a command in Italy. The name is apparently Germanic.

<sup>76</sup> For the treaty with Qays, see above, 158–60.



Saracen invasion of Roman territory. Such incursions are usually presented as raids by nomads for acquiring booty and inflicting devastation on the settled lands and their sedentaries.<sup>77</sup> Marcellinus' passage preserves an important reason behind such raids—the eternal problem of the Arabian Peninsula, periodic drought threatening a pastoral society.<sup>78</sup> The number of the invaders, fifteen thousand, is striking. Since the terms of the *foedus* with Kinda are known only in outline, one is grateful for this glimpse of the Kindite manpower that was at Byzantium's disposal in the Peninsula, to be called upon for operations against enemies such as the Persians and the Lakhmids, as in Julian's mission which included a contingent from Kinda in his plan for a general assault on Persia ca. 531. This large number also gives an idea of the immense ethnic reservoir of the Peninsula, and how dangerous for Byzantium it could be when united, as it was to be in the seventh century for the first time under Islam.

#### IV. NOVEL 102 ON ARABIA

Novel 102 on Arabia, issued in 536,<sup>79</sup> mainly addressed the enhancement of the position of the civil governor vis-à-vis the military *dux*. Among other things, he was given the title *moderator* and raised to the rank of *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος).

The novel contains two striking references to the province as "the country of the Arabs": τὴν Ἀράβων χώραν.<sup>80</sup> Although Arabia had been a Roman province since its annexation under Trajan, and its inhabitants had been Roman citizens since Caracalla's edict in 212, the emperor's referring to it as "the country of the Arabs" testifies to the persistence of its Arab character notwithstanding the *civitas* and the Graeco-Roman names assumed by the people. This novel is thus an important witness for the degree of Arabness of the Rhomaic Arabs in Oriens, toward the end of the early Byzantine period in Bilād al-Shām and just before the Muslim conquest of the region.

The reference to the phylarch of Arabia is a telling indication of the integration of the phylarchal system within the Byzantine military administra-

<sup>77</sup> The Oriental ecclesiastical writers, who lived in the Fertile Crescent and were exposed to the Arab pastoralists' raids, also said this. When Zacharia (actually pseudo-Zacharia) speaks of the Moors as people who live by robbery and devastation, he speaks of the Saracens as the Moors of the East, given to plundering (*HE* [CSCO 88], p. 91, lines 1–3). For deriving the etymology of "Saracen" from the Arabic for "plunderer," see *RA*, 123–41.

<sup>78</sup> Hence the elevation of water to a motif in the structure of the pre-Islamic Arabic ode, almost unique in world literature; Pindar's Ἀριστον μὲν ὕδωρ could easily have been said by the pre-Islamic Arab poet; see *Pindari Carmina*, ed. C. M. Bowra, *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1935), *Olympia I*, p. 1, line 1.

<sup>79</sup> *Corpus Juris Civilis*, III, *Novellae*, ed. R. Schoell and W. Kroll (Berlin, 1928) (hereafter *Corpus*), 492–95.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, proimion, 493, and cap. 3, 495.

tive structure in Oriens. This short reference comes in section 1,<sup>81</sup> in which the duties of the civil governor (the *moderator*) are defined. Apparently, since the *dux* had abused his power, the *moderator* was called upon to supervise tax collection and protect provincials from the rapacity of the *dux*: καὶ μὴ συγχωρεῖν μήτε τῷ περιβλέπτῳ δουκὶ μήτε τῷ φυλάρχῳ μήτε τινὶ τῶν δυνατῶν οἰκῶν. This reference to the phylarch of Arabia has attracted the attention of scholars who have studied the Ghassānids and the Provincia Arabia,<sup>82</sup> with discussion turning on the question of the rank of the phylarch.<sup>83</sup>

Nöldeke argued that *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος), here qualifying the *dux*, also qualifies the phylarch; R. E. Brünnow argued that the rank was not *spectabilis* but *clarissimus* (λαμπρότατος), while Chrysos argued that it was *gloriosissimus* (ἐνδοξότατος). The present writer has followed Nöldeke in reading the relevant phrase as preceded by *spectabilis*. First, the phylarch in question was Arethas, *basileus* and archphylarch of the federates in Oriens. Consonant with the elevation in his status must have been an elevation in his rank. Edict 4 on Phoenicia clearly states that the ordinary phylarchs had the rank of *clarissimus*.<sup>84</sup> Arethas' rank thus must have been higher—*spectabilis*, as suggested by the text of Novel 102. One can thus construe the phrase with περιβλέπτῳ covering both δουκὶ and φυλάρχῳ. Second, this source is not literary but a document par excellence, a novel issued by the emperor who conferred these ranks, and most likely written by Tribonian.<sup>85</sup> It is quite unlikely that the distinguished jurist would have left out the phylarch's rank: one may compare the edict on Phoenicia Libanensis, issued in the same year, in which Tribonian exactly specifies the phylarchs' rank after mentioning that of the dukes. In that edict the two ranks are different, as made clear by the wording. If the rank of the phylarch had been different in Novel 102 from that of the official mentioned before him, the *dux* of Arabia, this would have been specified; since it is not, the explanation must be that the ranks were the same.

In addition, if the phylarch had been qualified by the rank of *gloriosissimus*, it is difficult to believe that this would have been left out by the writer. The novel lists the officials in descending order: first *dux*, then phylarch, then the rest.<sup>86</sup> This order would have been broken if the second title, phylarch, had been qualified by ἐνδοξότατος. Although *spectabilis* is given as the phylarch's rank in this novel, the reference to him might sound somewhat

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 493.

<sup>82</sup> See the present writer in "Patriciate of Arethas," 341–43, and the earlier treatments by Nöldeke and Brünnow cited there.

<sup>83</sup> Chrysos, "Title," 49 note 131, and the present writer in "Titulature," 292–93.

<sup>84</sup> On the edict see below, 198–200.

<sup>85</sup> A. Honoré, *Tribonian* (London, 1978), 124–38.

<sup>86</sup> That the order is descending is clear in the edict on Phoenicia, where *clarissimus* (λαμπρότατος) comes after *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος); here too *phylarchoi* come after *duces*.

mented, considering that the person in question was Arethas, *basileus* and arch-phylarch.<sup>87</sup> However, the conferment of these ranks was strictly governed. *Spectabilis*, rather than *illustris* or *gloriosissimus*, would have been the right rank for Arethas, setting him apart from the other minor phylarchs with the rank of *clarissimus* and at the same time not elevating a non-Roman in the early phase of his career to the highest ranks. In his novels Justinian was anxious to appear not as a great innovator but as a traditional Roman, burning incense to historical tradition. The phylarchate was a barbarian office that in its developed form did not go back to Roman times; Arethas' extraordinary arch-phylarchate was only seven years old when Novel 102 was issued. Hence the caution that characterized imperial treatment of the office of phylarch so far as rank was concerned, as reflected in the novels and edicts. Higher ranks were conferred on Arethas later as his career progressed, and as the office of phylarch became more familiar as part of the Byzantine administrative structure.<sup>88</sup>

#### V. EDICT 4 ON PHOENICIA LIBANENSIS

Edict 4 on Phoenicia Libanensis<sup>89</sup> was issued the same month and year as the novel on Arabia, May 536. As the problems of this province clearly were not as serious as those of Arabia, the text is shorter; its main concern is the same: the assertion of the power of the civil governor over the military and his elevation from *praeses* to *moderator* with the higher rank of *spectabilis*.

As Novel 102 on Arabia was valuable for establishing Arab phylarchal presence there, so this edict is for establishing federate and phylarchal presence in Phoenicia Libanensis. In wording and context the passage here is almost identical with the preceding: it calls on the *moderator* καὶ μὴ συγχωρεῖν μήτε τοῖς περιβλέπτοις δουξὶ μήτε τοῖς λαμπροτάτοις φυλάρχοις μήτε τινὶ τῶν δυνατῶν οἰκῶν.<sup>90</sup> This sole reference to the Arab phylarchs in this province firmly establishes their presence in Phoenicia Libanensis. This might seem obvious, but this presence is often not explicitly attested in the sources. Here too we have a reference to phylarchs in the plural, in keeping with the fact that this was a large and exposed province containing desert regions, which explains the assigning of more than one phylarch to it. Similarly, Justinian appointed two dukes, one stationed at Emesa, the other at Damascus.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>87</sup> However, referring to him in the singular as "the phylarch" (ὁ φύλαρχος), in contrast to the plural phylarchs in the edict, could convey a sense of his importance, as in the Usays inscription he is called "the king," *al-malik*. Cf. above, 123–24.

<sup>88</sup> See "Patriciate of Arethas," 321–42, and in the 5th century the possible patriciate of Amorkesos (see *BAFIC*, 106–11). On Justinian's stance cf. Maas, "Roman History and Christian Ideology."

<sup>89</sup> See *Corpus*, III, pp. 761–63.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 762, cap. 2, lines 30–31.

<sup>91</sup> See above, 172–74.

This text gives the phylarchs their correct rank in the Byzantine system of honors, *λαμπροτάτοις* (*clarissimis*), in contrast to the phylarch of Arabia, Arethas, who was *spectabilis* (*περίβλεπτος*). These in Lebanon were ordinary phylarchs, inferior in rank to the *spectabilis dux*. The more distinguished phylarchs had the higher ranks that appear in Greek inscriptions.<sup>92</sup> The phylarchs mentioned in the edict were subordinate to the *duces* of the province. If there were two phylarchs, they may have been associated with or attached to the two *duces*, one at each posting. One also thinks of the mysterious term *Skenarchia*<sup>93</sup> in relation to the phylarchal presence, but this is still an enigma. In the *Notitia Dignitatum* two Saracen units are assigned to Phoenicia; in the fifth century, the date of the *Notitia*, they probably were Salīhid federates.<sup>94</sup> With the decline of the Salīhids and the rise of the Ghassānids, the latter may have been put in command of these two units, called in the *Notitia* "Equites Saraceni Indigenae" and "Equites Saraceni," stationed respectively at Betroclus and Thelsee. These sites were identified by A. Musil with Forklos and Khan al-Ajjas.<sup>95</sup> If these units survived into the sixth century and were commanded by Ghassānid phylarchs, these sites would have been the phylarchs' postings.

The tribal affiliation of these phylarchs may well have been Ghassānid. Compare Malalas' passage on the expedition against Mundir in 528,<sup>96</sup> in which recognizably Ghassānid phylarchs took part: the two names there, Jafna and Nu'mān, may have been phylarchs of Phoenicia Libanensis. Their being Ghassānids gives a clearer picture of the diffusion of Ghassānid power and the emergence of a strong Ghassānid presence in the three provinces of southern Oriens: Palestine with Abū Karib, Arabia with Arethas, and Phoenicia with Jafna and Nu'mān.

Here one must compare three passages in literary sources, two Greek and one Arabic. First, when Malalas was describing Justinian's reorganization of Phoenicia Libanensis in 527, in particular the rebuilding of Palmyra and the stationing there of a *numerus*, he conceived of these fortifications and renewals as a safeguard for Jerusalem and the Holy Land.<sup>97</sup> The Ghassānids were protectors of the Holy Land, stationed as they were in Arabia, Palaestina Secunda, and Palaestina Tertia; so their military presence in Phoenicia adds another dimension to their assignment, that of guarding the frontier that protected the Holy Places. Second, Procopius tells the story of the *Strata* dispute be-

<sup>92</sup> See below, 489–512.

<sup>93</sup> The term is used for a region in A. H. M. Jones' map in *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1971), and for a locality in E. Honigmann's article in *RE*; see *BAFOC*, 287 note 10.

<sup>94</sup> On these two Saracen units in the *Notitia*, cf. *RA*, 591, *BAFOC*, 486 note 81, and *BAFIC*, 18, 221, 471.

<sup>95</sup> A. Musil, *Palmyrena* (New York, 1928), 252–53.

<sup>96</sup> See above, 70–76.

<sup>97</sup> See above, 172–73.

tween Arethas and Mundir, which served as Persia's pretext for the outbreak of the second Persian war with Byzantium.<sup>98</sup> This account documents the Ghassānids' involvement with Phoenicia, as according to Procopius the *Strata* was south of Palmyra. In such an important border dispute it was Arethas the archphylarch, not the lesser phylarchs of Phoenicia, that was involved, illustrating the archphylarch's trans-provincial jurisdiction. Here too it was Arethas, not the *duces*, who was the defender of the Roman *limes*, confirming the view that it was to the Ghassānids (and not the *duces*) that the defense of the oriental *limes* sector from Palmyra to Ayla was primarily left.<sup>99</sup>

In his account of the Ghassānids' buildings, the Islamic author Ḥamza states, in his Arabic chronicle, that there was a Ghassānid presence in Tadmur/Palmyra. Although Nöldeke rejected this datum, it seems confirmed by the explanation of Justinian's edict on Phoenicia. With Palmyra being the seat of one of the two *duces* of this province in Justinian's early years, one of the phylarchs may, as stated above, have been associated with him, residing in the city. Alternatively, later in the sixth century, when Ghassānid power was extended north of Palmyra to the Euphrates, they could then have established their presence there.<sup>100</sup>

#### VI. NOVEL 103 ON PALESTINE

In June 536, a month after the two texts previously discussed, Justinian issued Novel 103 on Palestine.<sup>101</sup> It is concerned with the same matter: the elevation of the civil governor of Palaestina Prima to the rank of proconsul with the epithet *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος), and the conferment of extraordinary honors, privileges, and responsibilities on him.<sup>102</sup> The novel's text is long and filled with details, important for understanding Justinian's conception of Palestine as the Byzantine Holy Land and the scene of the activities of the first Flavians. Above all, it is important for the history of Palestine in the early years of Justinian's reign and the problem of its division into three parts, Prima, Secunda, and Tertia.<sup>103</sup>

On the other hand, the novel has some areas of vagueness:<sup>104</sup> among other

<sup>98</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.1–11.

<sup>99</sup> See J. Sauvaget, "Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis," *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 115–30, and *BASIC* II.

<sup>100</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 52 note 1, where he admits the possibility of Ghassānid building activity but rejects phylarchal residence in Palmyra; cf. *ibid.*, 47. Further, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>101</sup> *Corpus*, III, pp. 496–99.

<sup>102</sup> Clearly in the wake of the Samaritan revolt.

<sup>103</sup> For a recent analysis see P. Mayerson, "Justinian's Novel 103 and the Reorganization of Palestine," *BASOR* 269 (1988), 65–71, and "Libanius and the Administration of Palestine," *ZPE* 69 (1987), 251–60.

<sup>104</sup> Some of the vagueness may be dispelled by close examination. When the novel uses language suggesting "two Palestines," as in cap. 2 line 24, this must mean Prima and Secunda, as is clear from the subsequent reference to Secunda in lines 26–27 (so Stein, *HBE*, II, 469 note

things it is practically silent on Palaestina Tertia, the administrators of the two other parts, and the headquarters of the *dux* of Palestine.<sup>105</sup> Also, in contrast to the two legislative acts treated previously, which refer explicitly to phylarchs and Arabs, and notwithstanding the actual strong phylarchal and federate presence in the province, this novel is surprisingly silent on these matters. This may be owed to the fact that the novel is mainly concerned with Palaestina Prima and its civil administration, while the Arab presence was mainly military and in Secunda and Tertia. The novel does, however, remain an important document for the Arab presence in Palestine, as will be seen from an analysis of some of the terms it uses.

Chapter 3 of the novel must be considered in two contexts. In the first, the emperor confirms what had been promulgated in the imperial pragmatic sanction: neither the *dux* nor the *stratēgos* should deprive the civil governor of Palestine, the proconsul, of the military authority conferred on him, that is, his command over soldiers (στρατιῶται) in the province should he need them. These two officers are referred to in the phrase οὔτε τὸν περιβλεπτον δοῦκα οὔτε τὸν ἐνδοξότατον στρατηγόν.<sup>106</sup> Could this *endoxotatos stratēgos* have been an Arab? In the second, the emperor specifies the duties of the *dux* and of the proconsul, separating the one from the other: the *dux* is to have under him the *stratiōtai* of the province, including the *limitanei* and the *foederati*, but not those allotted to the proconsul: καὶ ὁ μὲν ἡγήσεται στρατιωτῶν τε καὶ λιμιτανέων καὶ φοιδερᾶτων καὶ εἴ τι κατὰ τὴν χώραν ὀπλιτικὸν ὄλως ἐστί.<sup>107</sup> Were these φοιδερᾶτοι the Arab *foederati* of Palestine? It will be proposed here that the *stratēgos* styled *gloriosissimus* was an Arab commander, most probably the Kindite Qays, while the *foederati* whom the *dux* commanded were certainly Arabs.

### The *Stratēgos*

The two military officers mentioned in this novel are sharply distinguished from each other. The one is a *dux* with the rank of *spectabilis*; the other is a *stratēgos* with the rank of *gloriosissimus* (ἐνδοξότατος).<sup>108</sup>

The only Roman officer who could have been both *stratēgos* and *endoxotatos* was Summus, who, however, ceased to be *dux* of Palestine in 534, not

1, against K. Güterbock). As in identifying the Arab phylarch who helped put down the Samaritan revolt, one must be precise about the three Palestines in order to understand the Arab federate presence. The novel is not as precise as modern historians would wish on the distribution of military forces among the three.

<sup>105</sup> It is not clear whether it was in Ayla, Elusa, or Beersheba, all in Tertia.

<sup>106</sup> *Corpus*, III, p. 498, lines 39–40.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 499, lines 9–11: "The former (i.e., the *dux*) will be in command of the *stratiōtai*, the *limitanei*, the *foederati*, and the entire body of troops (armed men) in the country (province)."

<sup>108</sup> This *stratēgos*' identity and position were discussed by neither Abel nor Grosse.



returning to that office until 537/38. In 536, the date of the novel, the *dux* was Aratius, the *spectabilis* referred to here: thus he could not have been the *stratēgos*.<sup>109</sup> In addition, the novel refers only once to the *stratēgos*, so as to suggest that his functions were limited. He is mentioned in conjunction with the *dux*, and it is the various aspects of the latter's command that are specified. One might easily conclude that the *stratēgos*' position and his rank of *gloriosissimus* were honorary.<sup>110</sup> If the *stratēgos* was not a *Rhomaïos* and if his office was an honorary one, he may have been the Kindite chief, Qays, who was given a command in the Palestines, a command that was not the ordinary *phylarchia* but was clearly higher, a *hēgemonia*. Nonnosus, our source for Qays, uses *hēgemonia* and not *stratēgia*, but these terms were often interchangeable.<sup>111</sup> As argued, Qays' *hēgemonia* was probably more or less a sinecure since in federate Palestine dominated by the two powerful Ghassānids, Arethas and Abū Karib, there was no room for a new federate chief with an extraordinary command.<sup>112</sup> This corresponds to the substance of the novel, where it is the *dux* (not the *stratēgos*) who has the real power and responsibility.

The novel's silence on Arab phylarchal presence might be construed as an *argumentum ex silentio* for this identification of the *stratēgos* with Qays. The novel on Arabia and the edict on Phoenicia both explicitly mention those provinces' phylarchs in conjunction with the *dux*. Palestine, though, had a more diversified phylarchal presence, with Abū Karib in Tertia, Arethas in Secunda, the phylarchs of the Parembolē in Prima, and now Qays in addition. Some of these individuals had taken part in quelling the Samaritan revolt, the background for the issuance of Novel 103. As it is inconceivable that the novel could completely have ignored the Arab phylarchate of Palestine, identifying its *stratēgos* with Qays would fill that gap. One would thus learn more about the fortunes of Qays: that the representative of the house of Kinda was still alive in 536 and bore the rank of *gloriosissimus*. While the *stratēgos* of this novel could have been a successor of Qays, he probably was the same man, who would have been relatively young when he was endowed with the *hēgemonia* of Palestine.<sup>113</sup>

### The φοιδερχᾶτοι

The occurrence of the term φοιδερχᾶτοι in Novel 103 provides further evidence for its semantic development in the sixth century. Mommsen had

<sup>109</sup> For Summus, *PLRE*, II, 1038–39; on Aratius, see above, 183–85. The restrictions on the *dux* were also stated in a pragmatic sanction promulgated before the novel: cap. 3.

<sup>110</sup> Byzantine honorific titles such as στρατηλάτης, with the highest ranks, were given to the Ghassānids later in the 6th century; see below, 505–7.

<sup>111</sup> As they were by Choricus about Summus; see above, 185–94.

<sup>112</sup> Above, 157–60, and "Byzantium and Kinda," 68–69.

<sup>113</sup> An identification not arrived at by the present writer thirty years ago.

argued that the φοιδερῶτοι of the sixth century were private soldiers, a variety of *bucellarii*, recruited by *condottieri*.<sup>114</sup> Against this, J. Maspero argued that they were recruited from among the barbarians of all races who volunteered for imperial service and became organized as Roman troops under Roman officers. They formed the elite of the field army and were dispatched as needed in the campaigns of each reign.<sup>115</sup> Maspero's view has been accepted: that such was the sixth-century meaning of the Greek term φοιδερῶτοι, while the *foederati* of the fourth and fifth centuries were then called σύμμαχοι. In a note Mommsen did, however, express the view that the term *foederati* in its older signification did not, as Procopius says, fall into desuetude: whenever it was applied to the Saracens or the Goths it was used in the older sense. He indeed considered the use of the term in Novel 103 to be an example of the old sense: "ja in der Justinians nov. 103 c. 1, wo milites, limitanei, und foederati unterschieden werden, kann das Wort nur in diesem Sinn gefasst werden," with the clear implication that these *foederati* were Saracens or Arab.<sup>116</sup> Maspero, for his part, questioned this interpretation of φοιδερῶτοι in Novel 103, rejecting it on the grounds that the *dux* of the province, who is presented in the novel as in command of these troops, could not have commanded the last group had they been *foederati* in the old sense, because they were commanded by their own native leaders.<sup>117</sup> In this he was followed by R. Grosse who also did not accept Mommsen's view of what the word meant in Novel 103.<sup>118</sup>

More is known about Arab-Byzantine relations and about the Arab federate presence in Palestine than when Maspero wrote in 1910, a presence made more complex by the tripartite structure of the province. In reconsidering the views of these three scholars, it can now be judged that Mommsen was correct in interpreting φοιδερῶτοι in Novel 103 as referring to Arab *foederati* in the old sense of the word. He gives the Latin equivalents for the designations of the categories of troops enumerated in the novel—*milites*, *limitanei*, and *foederati*—corresponding to what is known about the various components of the Byzantine military establishment in Palestine. The first two are the categories listed for the province in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, while the third is the Arab federates, documented in the sources and treated in the present study and its predecessor.

It is impossible to believe that the Arab *foederati* would have been left out

<sup>114</sup> T. Mommsen, "Das römische Militärwesen seit Diocletian," *Hermes* 24 (1889), 195–279, esp. 215–21, 233–39.

<sup>115</sup> J. Maspero, "Φοιδερῶτοι et Στρατιῶται dans l'armée byzantine au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *BZ* 21 (1912), 97–109.

<sup>116</sup> Mommsen, "Militärwesen," 217 note 3.

<sup>117</sup> Maspero, "Φοιδερῶτοι," 108 note 4.

<sup>118</sup> Grosse, *RM*, 280 note 2.

of an enumeration of the categories of troops in Palestine. This is the province about which the sources are most informative on the Arab federate presence: on those of the Parembole, on Amorkesos,<sup>119</sup> Arethas, Abū Karib, and Qays the Kindite.<sup>120</sup> That of the Parembole survived into the sixth century,<sup>121</sup> and attestations of the other groups extend from the treaty of 502 to the novel of 536. The province felt the effect of their activities, in helping to quell the Samaritan revolt and in being disturbed by strife between phylarchs.<sup>122</sup> Palestine was involved with both of Byzantium's principal federate groups, Kinda that was given a general *hēgemonia* represented by Qays, and Ghassān represented by the extraordinary *Basileia*'s being held by the phylarch of Palaestina Secunda. The legislative act of 536 would not have been able to omit the Arab federates when it listed the categories of troops in this province.

When one compares all three legislative acts issued in 536—those on Arabia, Phoenicia, and Palestine—it can be seen that all three had a special interest in the military establishment in each province and its leadership, and how to curb it so that the civil governor could act freely without interference from the military. In contrast to the explicit mention of the phylarchs in the first two acts, it does not for its part seem possible that the act dealing with Palestine could have omitted mention of the Arab federate presence. The tenor of imperial legislation dealing with these three adjacent provinces suggests a continuity of concern, and in Novel 103 one finds the very term that defines the Arab allies' relationship to Byzantium—φοιδεράτοι.

Although one might think that the Arabs were implied in the phrase καὶ εἴ τι κατὰ τὴν χώραν ὀπλιτικὸν ὄλωσ ἔστί, there are good reasons for not accepting this. The novel is so specific on the categories of troops that reference to the Arab *federati* would not have been made in an ambiguous phrase added to leave no loophole for the *dux* to interfere in the proconsul's tasks. Such a dismissive reference would not have accorded with the reality of the strong and active federate presence with which Palestine bristled.

Here one must reexamine Maspero's interpretation of the φοιδεράτοι and the points on which he differed with Mommsen, whose view was defended above. First, it can be seen that there was no room in Palestine for a group of soldiers in the new sense according to which Maspero defined φοιδεράτοι: elite troops dispatched ad hoc around the empire like those who, according to Procopius,<sup>123</sup> accompanied Belisarius on the expedition against the Vandals. Regular Roman soldiers were stationed in Palestine (as in the

<sup>119</sup> See *BAFIC*, 40–49, 61–113.

<sup>120</sup> On the various groups see above, 125–28, 156–60.

<sup>121</sup> See *BAFIC*, 190.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. above on Choricus, 185–88.

<sup>123</sup> Procopius, *History*, III.xi.1–4.

*Notitia*),<sup>124</sup> and Arab federates kept the peace and defended the province. The Samaritan revolt in 529 might have required the dispatch of such an elite force; but, as has been seen from Malalas' account, the *dux* of Palestine invoked the aid of the Arab phylarch to put down that revolt, without an elite force being rushed in. The counter-reference appears to be that in the *De Insidiis* of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, which speaks of Eirenaios' writing to the regional governors, presumably in Oriens, for help with the Samaritan revolt: "Having led these out with a military force, he also brought Theodotus, surnamed Magalas, the *dux* of Palestine, with a large body of men and many others, to take up arms against the Samaritans."<sup>125</sup> As the translators observe, the Malalas and *De Insidiis* passages are hard to reconcile. Malalas' account, the more reliable, does not refer to φοιδερωῶτοι.<sup>126</sup> If the *De Insidiis* contains good data, these troops led by Irenaeus were probably *comitatenses* from Oriens, that is, the regular Byzantine field army more usually termed *stratiōtai*. The first category of troops listed by Novel 103, *stratiōtai*, may have included these men, if some of them still remained in Palestine after the Samaritan campaign.

Maspero's objection to Mommsen's view rested mainly on the fact that the *phoideratoi* in Novel 103 are specified as being commanded by the *dux*; hence he inferred that they could not have been *foederati* in the old sense, troops who were commanded by their own chiefs. Palestine, however, had in this period a special position and a very complex federate and phylarchal system. It had many sectors with many phylarchs and federate groups. These units belonged to different tribal affiliations, and the phylarchate was thus subject to tensions and frictions. Byzantium's two principal federates, Ghassān and Kinda, had overlapping jurisdictions in the persons of Arethas' *Basileia* and Qays' *hēgemonia*. The strife between two phylarchs in the 550s was between these same two men.<sup>127</sup> This must have created difficulties for Byzantium in dealing with them: hence too specific a set of references in the novel would have revealed the unease inherent in this structure as it was, especially with the added complications of ranks and titles. This would have presented real problems to whoever composed the novel's text, Justinian or Tribonian.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>124</sup> For the Byzantine military units stationed in Palestine, see *RA*, 60–61.

<sup>125</sup> Malalas, *Chronicle*, trans. Jeffrey and Scott, 261. For the *De Insidiis* see *ibid.*, xxxiii, and for the ms., *ibid.*, xxxii.

<sup>126</sup> Or to any troops brought into Palestine even when Irenaeus is involved.

<sup>127</sup> See above, 185–88.

<sup>128</sup> This may explain the difference in treatment of the Arab federate presence in Arabia and Phoenicia from that in Palestine, in the former being explicitly documented, in the latter not. In 536 the second Chalcedonian persecution of the Monophysites began, and the emperor may not have wanted to associate the Monophysite Ghassānids with the defense of Chalcedonian Palestine; see below, 207–9.

Thus the writer found it most convenient to subordinate the Arab *foederati*, at least in the language of this law, to the jurisdiction of the *dux*, who was in fact the superior of the provincial phylarch. Tactically the federates were under the phylarch, while strategically they were under the *dux*. The superior position of the *dux vis-à-vis* the phylarch is seen in the arbitration episode related by Choricus, in which the *dux* reconciles feuding phylarchs. One may compare the case of the phylarch, Arethas the Kindite, and the *dux* of Palestine, Diomedes: the phylarch lost that conflict and fled to the Arabian Peninsula.

That troops who were normally under one jurisdiction were, because of special circumstances, switched into another is not uncommon in the military history of Byzantium in this period. In this very novel the civil governor of Palestine is put over *stratiōtai* whom normally he did not command. There is a fifth-century precedent for Arab federates' being commanded by a Roman officer, Areobindus,<sup>129</sup> and in 541 Arethas the Ghassānid, normally in charge of his own Arab *foederati*, was put in command of Byzantine *stratiōtai* in Belisarius' Assyrian campaign.<sup>130</sup> All this in fact undermines Maspero's position that Arab *foederati* could not have been commanded by the *dux*, a view rejected here. The present analyses of the *stratēgos* and the *phoideratoi* in Novel 103 can now show that the two novel references are interrelated and mutually illuminating. Both referent terms have to do with the Arab federate presence in Palestine, oblique though they are, given the special circumstances obtaining in this province.

#### VII. BYZANTINE-GHASSĀNID RELATIONS IN 536

When fifteen thousand Saracens invaded the Byzantine province of Euphratensis, where were the Ghassānids under Arethas, who had been made supreme phylarch to counter just this sort of threat? The invasion, moreover, was inspired by Mundir as a counterpoise to whom, according to Procopius, Arethas had been raised to that position.<sup>131</sup> The supreme phylarch appears everywhere in Oriens defending Byzantine interests. Three years later he contests Mundir's claim to the *Strata* (south of Palmyra in Phoenicia Libanensis), and eighteen years later in 554 he marches as far as Chalcis in Syria Prima to counter Mundir's invasion of Byzantine territory, giving him a battle in which the Lakhmid was killed.<sup>132</sup> These federates served as a striking force (virtually

<sup>129</sup> See *BAFIG*, 50–53.

<sup>130</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.xix.15–16. Although the Byzantine *stratiōtai* were under the command of two Roman officers, John and Trajan, Belisarius instructed them "to obey Arethas in everything they did."

<sup>131</sup> *History*, I.xvii.45–47.

<sup>132</sup> See below, 240–51.

a part of the Byzantine field army, the *exercitus comitatensis*) that was moved around ad hoc to meet crises.

Perhaps the Ghassānids were engaged elsewhere when this incursion took place. However, the more likely reason for their inaction is the new turn in Justinian's ecclesiastical policy. The attempts to reconcile the Monophysites in the early 530s culminated in Theodora's securing the appointment of Anthimus as patriarch of Constantinople after the death of the incumbent Epiphanius in June 535. Early in 536 Pope Agapetus arrived in the capital, securing the deposition of the Monophysite Anthimus and the appointment of Menas, consecrated 12 March 536. In May of that year Menas summoned a synod that anathematized the Monophysite leaders, Anthimus, Severus, and others, and condemned their writings. In August 536 Justinian issued Novel 42 addressed to Patriarch Menas, in which he confirmed the acts of the anti-Monophysite synod and fulminated against the Monophysites including Severus, who was in a special relation to Oriens, the seat of the Ghassānids and location of his former patriarchal see, Antioch.<sup>133</sup>

The Ghassānids were staunch Monophysites who had left Byzantium's service because of the first persecution of their confession; they returned after Justinian began his reign with a new orientation, and fought loyally for Byzantium during the first Persian war. These events of 536 must have shaken them, leaving them bewildered and resentful of what had happened to their religious heroes. Echoes of Novel 42, attacking the Monophysite faith and its protagonists, must have reached the Ghassānids in Oriens,<sup>134</sup> as the emperor asked Menas to make the law known everywhere.<sup>135</sup> Especially offensive to them must have been the anathemas against their revered Severus and Peter of Apamea,<sup>136</sup> churchmen they knew personally, and the provisions forbidding anyone to receive the exiled Monophysite ecclesiastics under their roof. The Ghassānids particularly, with their Arab concept of *jiwār*, giving refuge to whoever asks for it,<sup>137</sup> would have been enraged by this. Later in the sixth century, Ghassānid camps were to be the refuges for the Monophysite exiles Jacob and Paul.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> For these events see W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement* (Cambridge, 1972), 269–74.

<sup>134</sup> *Corpus*, III, pp. 263–69.

<sup>135</sup> Severus would have informed the Monophysites of Oriens about the new turn in Justinian's policy, in the letter he wrote after his expulsion from Constantinople; Zacharia, *HE*, 95–96.

<sup>136</sup> For Peter of Apamea, the metropolitan of Syria Secunda, see E. Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d'Asie antérieure au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, CSCO, Subsidia 127 (Louvain, 1951), 57–63. He is mentioned by name in Simeon of Bēth-Arshām's letter sent from the Ghassānid camp of Jābiya; *Martyrs*, 63, and 104, note to line 9.

<sup>137</sup> On *jiwār* see BAFOC, 156 note 68.

<sup>138</sup> See BASIC I.2, 865–69.



The Monophysite historians tell a great deal about what they term the second persecution of their confession. Zacharia describes how its instrument was the powerful Patriarch of Antioch, Ephraim, a former *comes Orientis*, who became a kind of inquisitor charged by Justinian to enforce the decrees of the Constantinople synod of 536, visiting both the cities of northern Oriens and Alexandria to do so. On his way there he must have passed through the provinces where there was a strong Ghassānid presence—Phoenicia, Arabia, and Palestine: Zacharia indeed records his passage through Palestine. In one of these areas he might even have met the supreme phylarch and tried to win him over to Chalcedon. The Ghassānids, however, remained loyal to their Monophysite confession, as they had done and were to continue to do throughout all the approaches made to them in the course of the sixth century.

The much later Michael the Syrian does indeed relate an encounter between Patriarch Ephraim and Arethas, in which the former tries to convert the phylarch to the Chalcedonian position but is rebuffed. Michael does not give a date for this encounter, but it could easily be tied in with the events of 536–537 by comparison with Zacharia's more detailed chronology.<sup>139</sup> One may infer that, as a result of this new hard line, the Ghassānids preferred inaction during the Euphratensis crisis<sup>140</sup> rather than going to open revolt as they had done in Justin I's reign and were to do again under Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice.<sup>141</sup>

Here one may again consider the three laws of 536 discussed above, in which the Arab phylarchal presence in the relevant provinces is in two cases explicitly mentioned and in the third implied. This presence is rather understated, particularly in the novel on Arabia where it is Arethas himself who is involved. May 536, the date of issuance of the novel on Arabia and the edict on Phoenicia, was a bad time for the Monophysites. One may easily conclude that the coolness of these two laws toward the Ghassānid phylarchs can be related to ecclesiastical events in the capital. The same may be predicated of the novel on Palestine issued a month later: perhaps in this case the Chalcedonian government did not wish to suggest that the Chalcedonian Holy Land, the holiest place in the empire, was being defended by the swords of some "unconvenanted Saracens" who obstinately persevered in their heresy.<sup>142</sup> After

<sup>139</sup> Zacharia, *HE*, 118–20.

<sup>140</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 746–55, for analysis of the episode preserved by Michael.

<sup>141</sup> The natural interpretation of the Marcellinus passage suggests that the drought that drove the Kindites into Euphratensis was in the summer of 536. Anthimus' deposition and Menas' appointment occurred in the first half of 536, before August.

<sup>142</sup> Even Qays the Kindite might have been persuaded to become a Chalcedonian. Constantinople applied such pressure to visiting foreign dignitaries, such as Mundir the Ghassānid and his son Nu'mān. Perhaps the strife between Qays and Arethas recorded by Choricus was also related to such a doctrinal shift on Qays' part.

all, it was Justinian who was behind the composition of the three laws on the provinces as well as Novel 42 condemning the Monophysites. In a society in which the secular and the ecclesiastical were closely interwoven,<sup>143</sup> an interrelation of the three provincial laws, the anti-Monophysite novel, and the inaction of the Ghassānids is probable.<sup>144</sup>

## C

## The Second Persian War (540–545)

The second Persian war of Justinian's reign broke out in the spring of 540, and the Arabs, both Ghassānids and Lakhmids, figure prominently in its antecedents. In 539 a border dispute broke out between Arethas the Ghassānid and Mundir the Lakhmid, which finally led to the outbreak of war between Byzantium and Persia. Both groups of Arabs, however, suddenly disappear from the pages of Procopius. When the Ghassānids do appear it is only once, during the Assyrian campaign of 541, and only to have the charge of *prodosia* leveled against them by the historian. The Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, military allies of Byzantium and Persia respectively, were expected to appear in each campaign. Close examination of the course of this war reveals a series of omissions on Procopius' part, in addition to those noted by Procopian scholars, and shedding new light on his *Kaiserkritik*. While Procopius remains the principal source for this war, some Oriental sources are available both for making good his omissions and for a closer scrutiny of his *ira et studium* in covering the war.

## I. THE STRATA DISPUTE

With the Endless Peace of 532, Arethas disappears from Procopius' *History* until 539, when both he and Mundir return to the limelight. Alarmed by what he had heard of Belisarius' victories in Italy, Chosroes asked his Lakhmid client-king to provide him with a pretext for going to war against Byzantium. The result was the *Strata* dispute, the quarrel of the two Arab kings over a piece of land south of Palmyra—the *Strata*—which became the ostensible immediate cause of the second Persian war. Procopius devoted a chapter to this dispute,<sup>1</sup> enabling the student of Arab-Byzantine relations in this period to scrutinize his account, which presents dimensions even more important than the purely diplomatic and military ones that are easy to see.

<sup>143</sup> Emphasized in the prooimion of Novel 42.

<sup>144</sup> Justinian's dismissive manner toward the Ghassānids in the novel on Palestine is comparable to that of the Chalcedonian hagiographer of Palestine, Cyril of Scythopolis. In the latter's work, Arethas is presented as a *persona non grata* who fills the province with terror and disorder; cf. below on the Aswad episode, 251–55.

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *History*, I. i. 1–15.

## The Greek Source: Procopius

After Chosroes asked Mundir to provide him with a pretext for breaking the Endless Peace, Procopius says: "So Alamoundaras brought against Arethas the charge that he, Arethas, was doing him violence in a matter of boundary lines, and he entered into conflict with him in time of peace, and began to overrun the land of the Romans on this pretext."<sup>2</sup>

From Mundir's complaint and from the statement of Summus, one of the two arbitrators, "that the Romans ought not to surrender the country,"<sup>3</sup> it is clear that the disputed territory was in Arethas' hands. When did he acquire it for Rome? The background for his acquisition of this territory must be Justinian's fortification of Palmyra in 527 to protect the region to its south from Mundir's raids and his elevation of Arethas to the supreme phylarchate to meet the threat of Mundir. Arethas must have deemed it necessary for the defense of the Roman frontier, probably during the course of the first Persian war when the frontier was militarily operational.

The statement that "(Mundir) entered into conflict with (Arethas) in time of peace" raises the question of the date of the *Strata* dispute, which has been variously dated to 537/38 or 539. The argument for the earlier date<sup>4</sup> is linked with Summus' ducate over Palestine; however, the chances are that when Summus arbitrated the dispute, he had already left his Palestinian command.<sup>5</sup> This, together with the fact that the second Persian war was started by an impatient king of kings in 540, could point to the later date, 539, closer to 540. It is also curious that Mundir should have chosen this sector of the Roman frontier to pick a quarrel with Arethas. It is not impossible that Mundir knew that after the conferment of the supreme phylarchate on Arethas, the latter's jurisdiction extended from the Provincia Arabia in the south to Pal-

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., I.i.3. The brief statement that Mundir "began to overrun the land of the Romans" is elaborated in the letter from Justinian to Chosroes sent in the winter of 539/40: "But for us it is possible to point out that thy Alamoundaras recently overran our land and performed outrageous deeds in time of peace, to wit, the capture of towns, the seizure of property, the massacre and enslavement of such a multitude of men, concerning which it will be thy duty not to blame us, but to defend yourself" (*History*, II.iv.21, trans. Dewing). Note that Justinian says that Mundir's raid happened ἐναγχος ("recently, just now"), helping to date the *Strata* dispute to 539; see below, 224.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., I.i.11.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. above, 191-94. Procopius' use of χρόνος πολὺς (*History*, I.i.11) might suggest a long lapse of time between the *Strata* negotiations and the outbreak of war; but "a long time" is relative and might have been weeks or months, not years.

<sup>5</sup> Had a *dux* been wanted for the arbitration, one from Phoenicia Libanensis, the most affected by the dispute, would have been chosen. Summus' being sent all the way from Palestine suggests that he was no longer a provincial *dux* but a higher-level administrator alongside Strategius, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*. Procopius speaks of the embassy of the Goths, sent to Chosroes in 539, as being sent at the same time as the *Strata* dispute (ἐν τοῦτῳ: *History*, I.ii.1).

myra in the north;<sup>6</sup> hence this is the segment of the line protected by Arethas closest to Mundir's territory. In any case, the dispute justifies Justinian's decision to fortify Palmyra and to increase the number of dukes for Phoenicia from one to two.<sup>7</sup>

Mundir goes on to say that "as for him, he was not breaking the treaty between the Persians and the Romans, for neither one of them had included him in it. And this was true. For no mention of Saracens was ever made in treaties, on the ground that they were included under the names of Persians and Romans."<sup>8</sup> The ambiguous position of the two Saracen federates of Persia and Byzantium is made clear in the account of the *Strata* dispute.<sup>9</sup> Technically they were *foederati* and not citizens of either Persia or Byzantium; hence they were expected to be mentioned separately in treaties. In fact, however, they were dependent client-kingdoms, each with a *foedus* that was a *foedus iniquum*, according to which they were expected, among other things, to toe the line. At last the two federates were specifically mentioned in one of the provisions of the treaty of 561, but even that did not prevent the Lakhmids from violating the peace in the 560s.<sup>10</sup>

Procopius goes on to describe the disputed territory: "Now this country which at that time was claimed by both tribes of Saracens is called *Strata*, and extends to the south of the city of Palmyra; nowhere does it produce a single tree or any of the useful growth of corn-lands, for it is burned exceedingly dry by the sun, and from of old it has been devoted to the pasturage of some few flocks."<sup>11</sup> Procopius' naming of the territory as *Strata* can be linked with Malalas' earlier reference to Diocletian's construction of the *Strata Diocletiana*, the military road furnished with forts and watch towers that ran from Damascus northeast to Palmyra and thence to Sura on the Euphrates. Here, some two centuries after Diocletian, his *Strata* is still referred to as such by the later writer, and is still functional as a segment of the Byzantine frontier.<sup>12</sup>

As master of this segment of the *Strata*, Arethas appears as a frontiersman, a *limitaneus*, even if not technically designated by that term. His assignment is the watch on the *limes*, one contiguous with the world of the Arabian Peninsula with its restless pastoralists: this is consonant with his assignment to contain Mundir, especially as regards the *limes* segment from the far south

<sup>6</sup> On this and on Lakhmid spies in Ghassānid territory, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>7</sup> Bury (*HLRE*, I, 96) noted that "Palmyra was a centre of routes leading southwards to Bostra, southwestward to Damascus, westward to Emesa, and to Epiphania and Apamea."

<sup>8</sup> *History*, I.i.4-5.

<sup>9</sup> This is the *locus classicus* for examining the legal status of these federates from the point of view of international law.

<sup>10</sup> On the Peace of 561 and its sequel, see below, 266-82.

<sup>11</sup> *History*, I.i.6.

<sup>12</sup> Malalas, *Chronographia* (Bonn ed.), 308; note that he refers to the *Strata* as *limes*.

to Palmyra. He appears quick to respond to the military exigency created by Mundir's sudden appearance on the oriental *limes*; he marches quickly from his headquarters in Gaulanitis (in Palaestina Secunda) to the vicinity of Palmyra. Procopius' account gives a significant glimpse of Arethas as a frontiersman.<sup>13</sup>

This passage is also relevant to the question of the two *limites* in frontier studies.<sup>14</sup> The crucial phrase is that used by Mundir against Arethas, namely, that he was doing him violence in a matter of boundary lines, ὅτι αὐτὸν γῆς ὁρίων βιάζοιτο, literally "that he was doing him violence concerning the land/territory of the boundaries."<sup>15</sup> The two important terms are the plural ὁρία and γῆ, both relevant to the definition of the *limes* that goes back to Mommsen as a fortified territory with two lines of defense, inner and outer.<sup>16</sup> This could support the view that the Ghassānids were in charge of the farther *limes*, directly facing the pastoralists of Arabia, while the two dukes of the province of Phoenicia were stationed in an inner line of defense. One does notice that when Mundir invades Roman territory the two dukes do not appear on the scene to defend the province, but leave the matter in Arethas' hands. For their part, the two dukes of Lebanon did not always leave Mundir entirely to Arethas to deal with. During the Assyrian campaign of 541 the latter two were anxious to get back to their province out of fear that Mundir might ravage the frontier. Thus, from the *Strata* passage and that on the Assyrian campaign, the cooperation of federate and imperial forces in the defense of Oriens becomes clearer.<sup>17</sup>

The description of the aridity and uselessness of the territory is probably part of Procopius' art in employing *Kaiserkritik*, comparable to his treatment of Phoinikōn when Abū Karib presented it to Justinian.<sup>18</sup> The fertility aspect is irrelevant; it was the strategic importance that mattered. Describing the *Strata* in this way also prepares the way for commending the judgment of one of the arbiters, Strategius, at the expense of the other, Summus.

In Procopius, this is how Arethas argues against Mundir: "Now Arethas maintained that the place belonged to the Romans, proving his assertion by the name which has long been applied to it by all (for *Strata* signifies "a paved road" in the Latin tongue), and he also adduced the testimonies of men of the oldest times."<sup>19</sup> It is striking that he argues that the *Strata* belonged not to him but to the Romans, in contrast to Mundir, who maintained that it be-

<sup>13</sup> For a Greek inscription describing a Ghassānid phylarch as ὁρικὸς, see below, 509–11.

<sup>14</sup> See *BASIC II*, forthcoming.

<sup>15</sup> *History*, I.i.3.

<sup>16</sup> See most recently B. Isaac in *JRS* 78 (1988), 125–47 (citing Mommsen on p. 130).

<sup>17</sup> For the two dukes of Lebanon during the Assyrian campaign, see *History*, II.xvi.17–19, xix.33–34.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I.xix.9, 12–13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, II.i.7.

longed to him. This reflects Arethas' growing sense of loyalty toward Byzantium since he had become *Basileus* and supreme phylarch. Arethas appears as a faithful servant of imperial interests, keeping watch on the oriental *limes*. This, together with his efficiency and alertness, contradicts Procopius' derogatory picture of him in the *Basileia* passage.<sup>20</sup>

Arethas' appeal to testimonies regarding Roman rights to the *Strata*, καὶ μαρτυρίαις παλαιωτάτων ἀνδρῶν χρώμενος, is problematic: this has been variously translated as "the testimony of the most venerable elders"<sup>21</sup> or "testimonies of men of the oldest times,"<sup>22</sup> rendering παλαιός (here in the superlative) as connoting either old in age or ancient in time. Although Arethas was not illiterate, it is hard to picture him adducing documents to prove a Roman right to the *Strata* going back to olden times. As he was relatively young at the time, the chances are that he appealed to the elders of the pastoralists who grazed their flocks there and knew of its having been Roman before Mundir seized it,<sup>23</sup> probably during the first Persian war or the reign of Justin I. Thus the former rendering has more weight.

The attestation of the word *Strata* in the discourse of an Arab circa 540 is important for Arabic lexicology and Koranic studies. Through its use in Oriens and Arab familiarity with the *limes*, the boundary of their coexistence with Rome, it became a loan in classical Arabic and a key word in the Koran,<sup>24</sup> usually used metaphorically as *ṣirāṭ* in describing Islam as the religion of the "straight path." Its use by Arethas is the earliest attestation of its utterance by an Arab.

As to the other side of the argument, Procopius says: "Alamoundaras, however, was by no means inclined to quarrel concerning the name, but he claimed that tribute had been given him from of old for the pasturage there by the owners of the flocks."<sup>25</sup> It is doubtful that Mundir said anything about quarreling over the name: this sounds like a Procopian aside put in to make Arethas look absurd for using a linguistic argument, and to make Mundir look realistic in appealing to more substantial grounds. It is part of Procopius' art in *Kaiserkritik* or even *Araberkritik*. The second part of the assertion, though, sounds authentic. One may ask how Mundir, who lived so far from

<sup>20</sup> Procopius gives himself away here, after denigrating Arethas as either traitorous or incompetent (*ibid.*, I.vii.48). During the *Strata* dispute he appears eminently loyal and competent.

<sup>21</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 92.

<sup>22</sup> *History*, trans. Dewing, I, p. 263, lines 7–8.

<sup>23</sup> In appealing to living authorities rather than archival records, he invoked the idiom of the Arabian desert and the Semitic Orient, as Rubin correctly understood (*Zeitalter Justinians*, 107).

<sup>24</sup> See A. Jeffrey, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'an* (Baroda, 1938), 195–96.

<sup>25</sup> *History*, II.i.8.



the *Strata*, could claim this to be Lakhmid territory in the sense of having tribute paid him by those who pastured their flocks there. Possibly, with the extension of his authority by Chosroes in the 530s over vast areas in Arabia, he came close to the Syrian border; and he may have established a presence in that area after his many raids on the Roman frontier in the preceding decades (it is attested that he had reached as far as Emesa).<sup>26</sup> Lakhmids had been in Oriens in the fourth century, when Imru' al-Qays defected to the Romans and was established in the Provincia Arabia not far from the *Strata*;<sup>27</sup> but a continuity over two centuries is hard to posit. What is important is that Byzantium's enemy Mundir had a foothold dangerously near the *limes*, thus justifying Justinian's fortifying Palmyra and reorganizing the military administration of Phoenicia Libanensis.

Fully occupied with the war in Italy, Justinian wanted a peaceful solution to the *Strata* dispute; he sent two arbiters, a soldier, Summus, and a civil servant, Strategius, thus combining civil and military competence. Each functionary was to view the situation from a different perspective. Strategius is described by Procopius as "a patrician and administrator of the royal treasures, and besides a man of wisdom and good ancestry." In judging the issues, "he begged of the emperor that he should not do the Persians the favor of providing them with pretexts for the war which they already desired for the sake of a small bit of land and one of absolutely no account, but altogether unproductive and unsuitable for crops."<sup>28</sup> Although Strategius, the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, may have viewed the issue as a conservative financial officer and so counseled prudence, one cannot believe Procopius' account as it stands. Though a civilian, Strategius could not have been blind to the strategic importance of the *Strata* for defense; for that matter, Summus could have explained it to him. Procopius' statement conceals the fact that sending him to accompany Summus speaks for itself. Justinian, well aware of Mundir's past weakness for the brightness of the Byzantine solidus, sent his chief financial officer in order to resolve matters by means of Byzantine gold. This can be seen also from Summus' negotiations with Mundir.

Summus is described as one "who had commanded the troops in Palestine," "the brother of Julian who not long before had served as envoy to the Ethiopians and the Homeritae," and he "insisted that the Romans ought not to surrender the country."<sup>29</sup> This was the professional judgment of a soldier who could see the *Strata*'s importance to Justinian's new defense system that

<sup>26</sup> Cf. above, 43. Possibly these pastoralists that he claims paid tribute to him were related to those that invaded Euphratesia in 536; see above, 194-96.

<sup>27</sup> See *BAFOC*, 31-62.

<sup>28</sup> *History*, II.i.9, 11. Strategius was an Egyptian from Oxyrhynchus.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, II.i.10-11.

involved Arethas.<sup>30</sup> Sending him reflected well on the emperor, showing that he knew it was desirable to send an expert on Arab affairs to deal with the problem.<sup>31</sup> Here again one sees Procopius' *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>32</sup> while Strategius is given good qualities, Summus is given none and is found wanting by contrast.<sup>33</sup> Strategius is portrayed as a wise and prudent counselor who did not want to involve the empire in war; Summus as a warmonger. In fact he was not: Choricus shows that he preferred peaceful rather than violent means of conflict resolution.<sup>34</sup> He judged as a soldier and advised accordingly. Procopius leaves out the strategic aspect of the *Strata*, as he had done that of Phoinikōn.<sup>35</sup>

The final phase involves Summus and Munḍir. According to Procopius, Chosroes alleged that Summus approached Munḍir with a letter from Justinian and promises of large sums of money, to attach him to the Byzantine emperor. The historian closes his section by saying: "But as to whether he was speaking the truth in these matters, I am unable to say."<sup>36</sup> To send Strategius, a financial officer, to arbitrate a military matter between two Arab kings illustrates Justinian's desire to use diplomacy as well as force to resolve disputes with Persia, especially when the latter's client-king Munḍir was involved. When diplomacy failed, Summus proceeded to buy Munḍir with Byzantine gold.<sup>37</sup> Possibly the emperor wrote a letter, as he had done to Arab figures early in his reign,<sup>38</sup> one cannot, however, accept an assertion that he wanted to win Munḍir over from allegiance to Persia, which he would have

<sup>30</sup> Rome was hardly in the habit of ceding territory, as seen in the response to Jovian's having done so in the 4th century.

<sup>31</sup> On Summus and the Arabs, see above, 185–94.

<sup>32</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas."

<sup>33</sup> Calling him "*this* Summus," with οὗτος (*History*, II.1.10), sounds somewhat dismissive, particularly compared to the generous treatment accorded Strategius.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. above, 186, 189–90.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. above, note 18.

<sup>36</sup> *History*, II.i.12–15. Note that Procopius vouches for the truth of the allegations in *Anecdota*, XI.12.

<sup>37</sup> A precedent is furnished by the ransoming of Timostratus and John at the conference of Ramla (above, 41–42; Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.44). After Callinicum in 531 Munḍir was also approached (Malalas, *Chronographia* [Bonn ed.], 466–67).

<sup>38</sup> On the letters of 528, cf. above, 70–71. Procopius again refers to these letters in *History*, II.x.16, where Chosroes says that it was one of such letters to Munḍir and the Huns that occasioned the second Persian war, while the ambassadors say that the letters were written not by the emperor but by some of his subordinates, presumably Summus and possibly Strategius (*ibid.*, II.x.18). This makes them out indeed to have been letters sent to entice Munḍir; the ambassador's reply is unconvincing, seemingly made only to exculpate the emperor. It is odd that K. Güterbock's specialized study *Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians* (Berlin, 1906), 46–47, mentions neither the *Strata* dispute nor the role of the Arabs in the negotiations leading to the treaty of 551 (though they are mentioned in the section on the Peace of 561).

known was impossible. Chosroes' allegation may have come from a misrepresentation by Mundir to his overlord, to protest his own loyalty. Again Procopius inserts his artful disclaimer by way of *Kaiserkritik* and coolness toward Summus; this helps the reader not think he was writing from prejudice, making him seem more persuasive.

#### The Oriental Sources: Ṭabarī and Firdawsi

In addition to Procopius, there are Oriental sources documenting the *Strata* dispute: the *Tārīkh* of Ṭabarī, in Arabic, and the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsi, in Persian. As both authors were ethnically Persian and their accounts derived from old Persian sources, matters are presented from a Persian perspective.

#### Ṭabarī

In Ṭabarī's account,<sup>39</sup> Arethas, who appears under the name of Khalid son of Jabala,<sup>40</sup> is portrayed as the aggressor: he raids Mundir's territory, subjecting it to massacre and spoliation. Mundir complains to Chosroes, asking him to write to Justinian: he does so, asking the emperor to do justice to Mundir by ordering Arethas to restore what he has looted and pay blood money for those he has killed. The emperor disregarded the letter, and so the second Persian war broke out. Here, alongside Procopius' Byzantine version, is the Persian version of what happened in the *Strata* dispute. It is Procopius, though, who is to be followed, since Chosroes, not Justinian, was the one interested in resuming hostilities. Justinian, involved in the Gothic war in Italy, wanted peace on the eastern front and was willing to buy it. Ṭabarī does, however, bring out Arethas' larger role in the conflict, referred to by Procopius in his rendition of Mundir's words.<sup>41</sup> While Mundir was responsible for the dispute, Arethas, one sees from the Arabic account, could inflict damage on Mundir when Roman interests were at stake.

This passage, together with its confirmation in Procopius, also reaffirms Ṭabarī as the major Arabic historian preserving the pre-Islamic past. His worth for reconstructing the history of the Lakhmid dynasty and Sasanid history is established: for the former he used Hishām al-Kalbī,<sup>42</sup> and for the latter, old Persian sources in Pahlavi.<sup>43</sup> The account of the *Strata* dispute must have come from a Persian document,<sup>44</sup> as can be seen from the form of the

<sup>39</sup> Nöldeke, *PAS*, 238–39, gives an annotated German version of Ṭabarī.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. below, note 45.

<sup>41</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.3.

<sup>42</sup> On this basis of his account Nöldeke could reconstruct the history of Sasanid Persia in *PAS* and Rothstein that of the Lakhmid dynasty in *DLH*.

<sup>43</sup> See *BAFOC*, 349–66, and *BAFIC*, 233–42. For Ṭabarī's source for Sasanid history, the Pahlavi *Khvadhāynāmagh*, see the present writer in "Theodor Nöldeke's *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*: An Evaluation," *IJMES* 8 (1977), 118.

<sup>44</sup> Almost certainly the *Khvadhāynāmagh* ("Book of Lords") of the preceding note. Ṭabarī's

name Hārith/Arethas as “Khalid,” explicable only as a result of transliteration from Arabic into Pahlevi and back to Arabic.<sup>45</sup>

### *Firdawsī*

The *Strata* dispute found its way into the medieval Persian national epic, Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāma*. While Ṭabarī speaks only briefly of Chosroes’ letter to Justinian, Firdawsī gives versions of what was said in it and the reply.<sup>46</sup> Chosroes writes to Justinian:

I will not let the wind blow on Munzir  
Since thou hast stretched thy hand upon the Arabs  
In fight take privy head for thine own self.<sup>47</sup>

Justinian replies:

As for that fool Munzir  
Take what he stateth at its proper worth  
If he complaineth out of wantonness  
Exaggerating thus the evil done  
Or if a single man complain within  
The desert of the wielders of the spear  
I will convert the heights of earth to breadths  
And that unwatered desert to a sea.<sup>48</sup>

More exchanges follow in which each ruler presents the case from his own point of view: Justinian complains of Mundir’s ravages upon Roman territory (“The javelin-wielding horsemen of the waste / Have pillaged our possessions

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data on the second Persian war must have come from this Persian historical tradition going back to old Sasanid times. Some of these data are of interest to Byzantinists, for example, Chosroes’ building a city on the model of Antioch on the Orontes not far from Ctesiphon, which Procopius calls Chosro-Antiocheia and Ṭabarī *al-Rūmiyya*, “the Roman city.” For data complementary to Procopius, *History*, II.xiv.1–4, see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 165, 239–40.

<sup>45</sup> Nöldeke, *PAS*, 238 notes 2, 3.

<sup>46</sup> *The Epic of Kings, Shah-Nama* (trans. R. Levy [Chicago, 1967]) gives only selections, not including the account of the *Strata* dispute; what is used here is *The Shahnama of Firdawsī*, trans. A. G. Warner and E. Warner (London, 1915). For the poem, completed in 1011, and its poet, see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, II (Cambridge, 1928), 129–48. Like Procopius, Firdawsī turned against his patron, Sultan Maḥmūd of Gazna, writing satire the way Procopius wrote the *Anecdota*. According to the story, though the sultan had promised the poet thousands of gold coins (dinars) for his epic, he substituted silver coins (dirhams). When the sultan relented and sent 60,000 dinars and an apology to the poet’s place of retirement at Ṭūs, the messengers arrived only in time for the poet’s funeral (*ibid.*, 135–38).

<sup>47</sup> *Shahnama*, VII, p. 245. “Munzir” is the Persian pronunciation of Arabic Mundir.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 245–46. Malalas ascribes such fulminations to Justinian after Callinicum, having him send a peace ultimatum to Chosroes threatening τὴν Πελοποιήν γῆν δι’ ἑμαυτοῦ κατὰλήψομαι (*Chronographia* [Bonn ed.], p. 467, line 6).

in their raids"<sup>49</sup>), while Chosroes replies with a phrase that would have pleased Procopius: "The brains of Caesar / are wedded not to wisdom."<sup>50</sup>

It is not known whether the substance of the exchange between Justinian and Chosroes derives from the poet's imagination or rests on some old Pahlevi source; possibly the latter, rather than Ṭabarī's short account. The way Procopius tells it suggests that such an exchange could have taken place. Firdawsi's source, it can be postulated, may have been the Pahlevi *Khvadhāynāmagh*,<sup>51</sup> as traces of historically authentic echoes are discernible, for example, Justinian's priding himself on Alexander's conquest of Persia:

The doings of Sikandar in Iran  
Thou knowest, and we claim that noble Shah.  
Sikandar's sword is still in evidence;  
Why pickest thou a quarrel with us thus?<sup>52</sup>

The expansiveness of Firdawsi's passage on the *Strata* dispute<sup>53</sup> justifies its being brought into conjunction with the sources better known to Byzantinists.<sup>54</sup>

What emerges from an analysis of the *Strata* dispute is Muḍir's central position in it: in the preliminaries, the arbitration, and Summus' negotiations to secure peace. His prominence here recalls that in the Ramla conference of the 520s. Also, his function in Persia's calculations against Byzantium clearly comes out: he is the perfect tool in the hands of the Persian king. He pretends to be an independent ruler when he wants to attack Byzantium without giving the impression that his overlord had asked him to; and when challenged, he retorts that he was not included in the Endless Peace of 532. When it suits the great king to accuse Byzantium of violating that treaty, he complains that for Byzantium to negotiate with Muḍir was an act of aggression against himself, thus setting aside the notion of Muḍir's independence. So, out of a local dispute between two Arab kings, there grew a situation that Chosroes could construe as a *casus belli*, however proximate, for a second war.

<sup>49</sup> *Shahnama*, VII, p. 248.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 246. As in Persian documents, so in Arabic, the Byzantine *autokrator* appears as "Ḳaysar," Caesar; cf. the present writer in *EI* <sup>2</sup>, s.v. Ḳaysar.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. above, note 43.

<sup>52</sup> *Shahnama*, VII, p. 248. Sasanid Persia knew Alexander and what he had done to Achaemenid Persia.

<sup>53</sup> So is his account of the Peace of 545, *ibid.*, 261–63. Besides the tribute, he refers to South Arabia (Yaman) and to Persian insistence that Justinian not interfere in the affairs of that country. This may be related to the embassy to Abraha that is recorded in the Sabaic Dam inscription; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>54</sup> For the full account, see *Shahnama*, VII, pp. 244–49.

II. THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE WAR AND THE *PRODOSIA* THEME

If Procopius' account of the first Persian war was brief,<sup>55</sup> that of the second is detailed and complete, although his account of the Ghassānid contribution is quite uninformative. The Ghassānids appear only once, as traitors to the Roman cause during the Assyrian campaign in 541. While for the first war Procopius could be checked against other sources such as Malalas and Zacharia, for the second he stands almost alone; when Oriental sources<sup>56</sup> speak of the Arabs in this war, it is only to do with the *Strata* dispute. Again one must analyze Procopius' historiography: the Ghassānid federates might well have participated often in the operations of this war, probably in each campaign of the four years. They were in Byzantium's pay specifically to fight: they were paid the *annona* annually in gold<sup>57</sup> and would not have been kept idle, especially when it was a question of fighting in a climate and terrain they knew well.<sup>58</sup>

The federates in this period were not stationed only to watch the frontier: they were virtually part of the Byzantine field army, the *exercitus comitatensis*, which was sent as needed on campaigns such as those being discussed here. Since the flower of the Byzantine army had been sent to Italy and was still pinned down in the Gothic war, the Ghassānids were needed for the war on the eastern front. The Byzantine army that faced the Persians there was not a provincial army under its *dux*, but the army of the Diocese of Oriens under the *magister militum per Orientem*, an army that contained many ethnic groups (as enumerated by Procopius on one occasion in 542: Thracians, Illyrians, Goths, Eruli, Vandals, and Moors).<sup>59</sup> Thus one may reason that the Ghassānids formed part of this army.<sup>60</sup>

In Procopius the Ghassānids appear once, as stated, in the Assyrian campaign in 541, with Arethas coming with a large army (στρατός).<sup>61</sup> Is it possible to believe that they did not take part in any preceding or subsequent year? Belisarius, who knew and trusted them, would not have been so quixotic. Not only their status as *foederati* but also their animosity toward the Lakhmids who faced them in the Persian army called for them to participate. They would have rushed to a conflict that pitted them against their enemies,<sup>62</sup> who had

<sup>55</sup> Only ten chapters; *History*, I.xii–xxii.

<sup>56</sup> As in Tabari and Firdawsi.

<sup>57</sup> Even Chosroes understood this (*History*, II.x.23); to him one owes knowledge that the Ghassānid *annona* was paid annually in gold (not in kind); but see below, 465, 467–68.

<sup>58</sup> Compare the Thracians, unable to endure the Mesopotamian climate during the Assyrian campaign in 541 (*History*, II.xix.31–32).

<sup>59</sup> *History*, II.xxi.4.

<sup>60</sup> The northernmost point Arethas reached in the first war was Armenia in 531 (cf. above, 142–43). This helps make it likely that in the second war he took part in the Byzantine campaign against Persarmenia in 543; he knew the region and his record spoke for his reassignment.

<sup>61</sup> *History*, II.xvi.5.

<sup>62</sup> On Lakhmids in the second Persian war, see below, 231–35.



faced them directly in the battle line before. Indeed, this is what happened just before the war broke out in 539, and again after the treaty that concluded it in 545, when the Ghassānids continued fighting the Lakhmids even after the two great powers were at peace. Thus they must have had a greater part in the second Persian war than just the one campaign.

The Ghassānids were devoutly Monophysite Christians, and many of Chosroes' campaigns in the second war were directed against the holy cities of Oriens—Antioch, Sergiopolis, and Edessa—with the last two of which the Ghassānids had a special relationship. Sergius of Ruṣāfa was their patron saint,<sup>63</sup> while Edessa was the city of the Arab Abgarids.<sup>64</sup> If the Ghassānids took part in defending these places, they would have done so with great zeal. In view of all this, one must again conclude that Procopius was being disingenuously selective in what he recounted of Arab participation in the second Persian war. When they do appear in Procopius, one now has more background against which to examine his account.<sup>65</sup>

#### The *Prodosia* Theme

Ten years after the battle of Callinicum in 531, Arethas appears again in the pages of Procopius in connection with another charge of treachery to the cause of the Romans, during Belisarius' Assyrian campaign, 541. Having failed to take Nisibis, Belisarius raised the siege, advanced against Sisauranon, another Persian fortress, and began another siege, at the same time sending Arethas and his *foederati* across the Tigris to pillage and reconnoiter.

Accordingly he commanded Arethas with his troops to advance into Assyria, and with them he sent twelve hundred soldiers, the most of whom were from among his own guard, putting two guardsmen in command of them, Trajan and John who was called the Glutton, both capable warriors. These men he directed to obey Arethas in everything they did, and he commanded Arethas to pillage all that lay before him and then return to the camp and report how matters stood with the Assyrians with regard to military strength. So Arethas and his men crossed the River Tigris and entered Assyria. There they found a goodly land and one which had been free from plunder for a long time, and undefended besides; and

<sup>63</sup> Note that it was 'Amr, a Christian Saracen from Mundīr's Lakhmid army, who saved Sergiopolis, a city located in the middle of the "Barbarian Plain," i.e., the Arab/Saracen plain (*History*, II.xx.10–14, v.29). Surely the Ghassānids would have hastened to aid the city of their patron saint in the siege of 542.

<sup>64</sup> The Ghassānids may well have been aware of the Arabness of the Abgarid dynasty. In the campaign of 544 a Lakhmid contingent operated with the Persians against Edessa, and one remembers that Mundīr's father, Nu'mān, had died besieging Edessa in 503.

<sup>65</sup> What follows is taken from "Procopius and Arethas."

moving rapidly they pillaged many of the places there and secured a great amount of rich plunder.<sup>66</sup>

In the meantime Sisauranon fell to the rhetoric of George. Its fall left Belisarius disengaged and well poised militarily to invade the land of the Persians, his original assignment; but he had to wait for the reconnaissance force to return from across the Tigris.

But Arethas, fearing lest he should be despoiled of his booty by the Romans, was now unwilling to return to the camp. So he sent some of his followers ostensibly for the purpose of reconnoitering, but secretly commanding them to return as quickly as possible and announce to the army that a large hostile force was at the crossing of the river. For this reason, then, he advised Trajan and John to return by another route to the land of the Romans. So they did not come again to Belisarius, but keeping the River Euphrates on the right they finally arrived at Theodosiopolis which is near the River Aborrhias. But Belisarius and the Roman army, hearing nothing concerning this force, were disturbed, and they were filled with fear and an intolerable and exaggerated suspicion.<sup>67</sup>

The failure of Arethas to report to Belisarius, together with the fever with which the army was afflicted, due to the inclement skies of Mesopotamia, and anxiety over the possible threat of Mundir to Syria and Lebanon, all induce Belisarius to call off the advance and beat a retreat: "And as soon as they got into the lands of the Romans, he learned everything which had been done by Arethas, but did not succeed in inflicting any punishment upon him, for he never came into his sight again. So ended the invasion of the Romans."<sup>68</sup>

The quotations from Procopius make clear that Arethas betrayed the cause of the Romans, and that this betrayal had military consequences in that it contributed substantially to the strategic check which Belisarius experienced in Assyria. It will be argued again that Procopius' views on the worth of Arethas in the Assyrian campaign are as questionable as those he expressed on his role at Callinicum, and are open to a number of objections.

*Self-Contradiction.* In the case of the battle of Callinicum, another historian, Malalas, was available, for a comparison of the two accounts, but for the Assyrian campaign this course is not open. The testimony of Procopius himself, however, is available in the *Anecdota*, not conclusive or final, but important and relevant in its own way, indeed critically relevant for the purpose of this argument. In the opening passage of the *Anecdota*, Procopius confesses that his etiology in the *History* left much to be desired and thus provides the

<sup>66</sup> *History*, II.xix.15-18, trans. Dewing.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xix.26-30.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, II. xix.46.

reader with the principle that should guide him in reading the *History*, namely, to keep vividly in mind the distinction between act and motive. An application of this principle to the Assyrian campaign is particularly fruitful. His account in the *Anecdota* of what happened in Assyria brings to light the following points: that, because of his domestic troubles, Belisarius was reluctant in the first place to be so distant from Constantinople; that during the course of the campaign, he was anxious to get back and had no intention of invading Assyria; that had Belisarius wanted, he could have crossed the Tigris, since Chosroes was away campaigning in Colchis; and that such an invasion was not only possible militarily but also desirable in view of what he could have accomplished.<sup>69</sup> This different etiology will serve to make intelligible the following relevant quotation from Procopius in the *Anecdota* causally connected with the above-quoted statement on his domestic troubles: "So for this reason he ordered Arethas and his men to cross the Tigris River, and they, after having accomplished nothing worthy of mention, departed for home, while as for himself he saw to it that he did not get even one day's march from the Roman boundary."<sup>70</sup>

As far as Arethas is concerned, the different account of the campaign in the *Anecdota* clears him of the charge of treachery, and also frees his alleged treacherous conduct from the military consequences ascribed to it—the strategic check. Both morally and militarily, Arethas' reputation is cleared. Arethas is shown to have executed an order to raid Persian territory, an operation that had no military implications (even it failed) on the wider issue of Belisarius' assignment and had no relevance to Belisarius' reluctance to execute it.

The evidence of the *Anecdota*, perfectly credible on purely military grounds, which Procopius set forth clearly and which we know answers to the truth about the military dispositions of the two contestant armies, is an important piece of evidence. But in itself it is not decisive for the purpose of the discussion. For it can very well be maintained that if Procopius' favorable judgment on one historical personage in the *History*, Belisarius for instance, is inspired by partiality, then his unfavorable judgment in the *Anecdota* is inspired by spite, and without any external test it is difficult to establish internally in which of the two works he was speaking on behalf of truth. The evidence from the *Anecdota* is, nevertheless, valuable, partly because it makes the suspicion of the veracity of Procopius on the Assyrian campaign perfectly legitimate and partly because it supplies some details that are important shreds of evidence for reconstructing the course of events during the Assyrian campaign.

*Inherent Improbability.* A careful examination of the accounts of Procopius,

<sup>69</sup> *Anecdota*, II. 18–25.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, II. 23.

especially those that bear on the charge of treachery, will reveal the improbable features of what might be termed a cock-and-bull story, pieced together in order to give the accounts an air of authenticity: Arethas, the commander of the joint Roman and Arab expedition, plays hide-and-seek with the Roman contingent; he reports the presence of an imaginary hostile force; the report is believed; the Roman soldiers go back and lose their way, while he himself disappears. Some of these improbable elements in the story need to be commented upon. The motive Procopius assigns to Arethas' treachery is greed. The Arab chief, after collecting booty from the Assyrians, disappears lest he should be despoiled of it by the Romans. But Arethas as a client-king received a handsome salary; and Byzantine gold, a steady yearly income, was much more valuable to him than the booty he is supposed to have collected from the Assyrians. His income might very well have been discontinued if the client-king played the traitor and ceased to function as a faithful soldier in the service of Rome, which the conduct that Procopius attributes to him would have insured. Furthermore, such conduct on the part of Arethas is incomprehensible since it would have encouraged the same tendency among his subordinate phylarchs, whom he wanted to keep in check—disobedience and insubordination. One of the major difficulties that Arethas faced was the enforcement of his authority as a chief over phylarchs of tribes other than his own. Their conduct at Callinicum has already been noted, and more disagreements were forthcoming in the 550s.<sup>71</sup>

Arethas' Roman connections served him best in dealing with his recalcitrant phylarchs. Engaging in predatory raids and betraying the Roman cause would only have defeated his aim to enforce obedience on his phylarchs and would have undermined the solid foundations of his power and authority, which rested on his Roman connections. The inherent improbability of such a conduct as Procopius has chosen to ascribe to Arethas is fortified by analogical reasoning with another expedition of a similar nature in which Arethas took part. In 528 Arethas was called upon to take part in a joint Roman and Arab punitive expedition against Muḍir, who had killed the Kindite Arethas. Arethas distinguished himself in that expedition and worked in perfect harmony with the Roman dukes. This was in 528, at a time when he was merely a phylarch. In 541, when he had been a king and supreme phylarch for more than ten years in the service of Rome, he was called upon to go on a similar expedition, this time himself in command of the Roman soldiers as well as his own native troops, a significant honor and a recognition of his military prestige and the confidence reposed in him. Just as Malalas corrected Procopius on Callinicum, so does he again correct the impression conveyed by Procopius on

<sup>71</sup> See below, 251–55.

Arethas during the Assyrian campaign, by affording us a description of the phylarch's contribution in a similar expedition in the 520s, which by analogy and *a fortiori* contributes to the exculpation of Arethas of the charge of treachery.<sup>72</sup>

*The Immediate Antecedents.* The short period of one or two years preceding the Assyrian campaign of 541 was a period of military and diplomatic activities with which the name of Arethas is closely associated. The Ghassānid king's record in these transactions was quite outstanding and particularly relevant for the purpose of discrediting the view popularized by Procopius on his treachery; indeed it makes such a charge utterly incomprehensible. In 539 the famous *Strata* dispute broke out between him and his opposite number, Munḍir, which turned out to be, at least ostensibly, the occasion for the outbreak of the second Persian war.<sup>73</sup> What is relevant for our purpose is the manner in which Arethas argued his case against Munḍir. To Munḍir's contention that the territory belonged to him on the ground "that tribute had been given him of old for the pasturage there by the owners of the flocks," Arethas replied that the place belonged not to Munḍir but to the Romans and that Rome's claim to the territory can be urged on the ground that the word *strata* itself is a Latin word. The interest of Arethas' contention is that the Arab client-king did not claim the place for himself but for the power of which he was vassal, a significant answer inasmuch as it points to the sense of loyalty Arethas had developed toward Rome and his conception of himself as a guardian of Rome's interest in the Syrian desert.

In addition to the military episode of the *Strata*, the diplomatic history of the period has evidence that bears on the position of Arethas in Rome's scheme of things, and which in turn bears on the estimation of his character as a faithful servant of Rome. Shortly after the *Strata* dispute, when it became clear that war between Persia and Rome was imminent, embassies reached the Abyssinian dynast of Yaman, Abraha, from all quarters, trying to win him to the Roman or the Persian side in the conflict.<sup>74</sup> Arethas dispatched a representative to help the Roman delegation at the court of Abraha. This diplomatic mission that Arethas was called upon to perform throws much light on his

<sup>72</sup> Procopius' picture of Bouzes resembles that of Arethas: treacherous in Armenia where he slays John the Arsacid (*History*, II.iii.31); evanescent in Euphratensis, he disappears with the flower of the Roman army without relieving Hierapolis. Procopius remarks: "For he chose all that portion of the Roman army which was of marked excellence and was off. And where in the world he was neither any of the Romans in Hierapolis, nor the hostile army was able to learn" (*History*, II.vi.8).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, II.i.1-15.

<sup>74</sup> For the embassies to Abraha and the Sabaic Dam inscription, see *BASIC II*. The embassies are variously explained and dated, according to one view to 539, in order to involve Abraha in the Persian-Byzantine conflict.

role in the oriental policy of Justinian. In the first place, it clearly indicates the rising importance of the client-king in the East. Second, it reflects the confidence reposed by Rome in the client-king and in his ability to lend prestige to Roman representation at the court of Abraha. Therefore, the military episode and the diplomatic role evidence both the loyalty of the Ghas-sānid king to Rome and the confidence that Rome reposed in him as a result of his tested loyalty in word and deed. The two occurring so close to each other show how Arethas was acting in perfect harmony with his duties, which he discharged to the full, a conclusion utterly inconsonant with the picture drawn of him by Procopius as a desert chief taking independent action during the critical phase of the Assyrian campaign and giving rein to his predatory instincts.

*The Sequel.* Shortly after the Assyrian campaign, Arethas wrote a very important chapter in the history of Syriac Christianity, when his efforts on behalf of the Monophysite church in Syria were crowned with success; through the support of the empress, that church received two newly ordained bishops, Jacob Baradaeus and Theodore.<sup>75</sup> For scoring this triumph Arethas made the journey to Constantinople. If Arethas, as Procopius would have the reader believe, had played the traitor during the critical phase in the campaign of the year previous to his visit, he would have been, to say the least, a most unwelcome guest in the capital, and he could not very well have engaged in negotiations with a view to wresting concessions from an emperor whom he had just betrayed. Even if his journey to Constantinople remains to be proved,<sup>76</sup> the nature of his efforts on behalf of the Syriac church are relevant and significant for the purpose of this discussion. These efforts reflect the concern of one who was not merely a desert warrior but a prince of peace to whom the charge associated with the wretched Assyrian booty is utterly incomprehensible.

One's religious affiliation, of course, is not necessarily a guarantee that one's conduct will answer to the ideals of that affiliation, since people do sometimes preach what they do not practice; but this would be an argument from the general to the particular if applied in this case. The personage in question was one whose adhesion to Christianity was not a nominal one. Enough has survived in the sources that attests to the genuineness of his piety and indeed his zeal. Throughout his long reign of forty years he took an active interest in the religious life of Syria, trying to win recognition for the Syriac church and to compose differences. He is referred to as εὐσεβέστατος,<sup>77</sup> he presides over local church councils, and gives evidence of his deep interest in theological controversies, an interest that sometimes reached the pitch of

<sup>75</sup> For Arethas' role in the story of Syrian Monophysitism, see *BASIC* I.2, 755–71.

<sup>76</sup> Stein, *HBE*, 625 note 1.

<sup>77</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 14.



righteous indignation! The charge is all the more untenable since faithfulness was precisely the virtue Christianity is supposed to have inculcated in the pagan Arab when it succeeded in converting him. In the case of Arethas, this faithfulness would have been eminently pronounced because the conversion of the Ghassānids to Christianity had been recent, and consequently Arethas would have possessed all the zeal of a convert to a new faith whose ideals he was anxious to live up to. Christianity was thus a bond between lord and vassal, a very important element in the loyalty Arethas could cherish toward Rome, unlike the Kindite Arethas, a chief whose religious "eclecticism"<sup>78</sup> could not have enforced on him the lessons of obedience toward Christian Rome.

To be sure, the well-known doctrinal differences between Syriac Mono-physitism and Greek Orthodoxy were there, but within the larger context of the Christian faith these could be sunk, and in any case could not have welled up in the course of a military campaign, especially when that campaign was conducted against the fire-worshippers and pagans. Just as Arethas' elevation to the *Basileia* had isolated him politically and surrounded him with enemies, so did the fact of his Christianity effect a similar religious isolation, which drove him more closely into the Christian field, especially as the pagan Mundir was wont to go out of his way to emphasize his hostility to the faith in which Arethas believed. Thus Arethas' Christianity was not merely the fact of a religious persuasion but was a most potent factor in the wars of the period and in its political alignments. By a happy coincidence the legal bond of *fides* that connected him with Justinian as lord and vassal found its counterpart in the bond of the Christian faith which connected him as a Christian king with the emperor who happened to be the head of the Christian state. Faithfulness was therefore an eminently Christian and imperial virtue that Arethas, the "Christian soldier," possessed, and which makes completely incredible the charge of faithlessness leveled against the Ghassānid king, a charge that ran contrary to his religious persuasion and his imperial loyalty which went side by side.

### III. THE ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGN OF 541

In trying to reconstruct the events that took place during the course of the Assyrian campaign and with which the Arabs were associated, one is handicapped by the unfortunate circumstance of having the word of Procopius as practically one's only guide. There is no Malalas to suggest alternatives to what Procopius had chosen to write. But luckily the details and the nature of the accounts given by Procopius give us a number of clues as to what might have happened. The process of reconstruction will proceed first on the as-

<sup>78</sup> He succumbed to Mazdakism temporarily.

sumption that the expedition might possibly have miscarried, and will take into account the two main facts concerning its outcome, and on which both the *History* and the *Anecdota* are agreed, namely, that Arethas and the Arabs did not return to the Roman camp, while the Roman troops under Trajan and John returned alone.

In the first place, Arethas might very possibly have lost his bearings in faraway Assyria. He was operating in enemy territory, across the Tigris, in a land that was to him *terra incognita*. The absence of the Persian army in distant Colchis, providing him with favorable raiding conditions and the possibility of deep incursions, enabled him to carry his raid far and wide, and at the same time made it difficult for him to retrace his steps and disengage himself as quickly as he could have done if he had been operating in a country with which he was familiar. Much time would then have been consumed, more than the *magister militum* had estimated when he sent him on the raiding expedition. The Roman troops who were sent with him, and who may have been reluctant to go too far raiding, were perhaps left behind and thus could have easily lost contact with him; as a result, they beat a retreat to the Roman camp alone. In the second place, there might very well have been a disagreement between Arethas and the two Roman officers, Trajan and John, a recurrent feature in the military annals of Rome in its dealings with the Arabs—the struggle between the Roman soldier and the Arab chief. Trajan and John, described by Procopius as being “capable warriors,” were put under Arethas’ command. This might have led to some friction between personalities and opinions concerning the conduct of the campaign.

Such disagreements would be expected since the Roman troops were given an unusual assignment and Arethas might very well have been self-assertive in a matter in which he rightly considered himself an expert. If so, then the two Roman officers would not have been kind to Arethas when they rejoined Belisarius, and Belisarius would have had only their word to go by, on what had happened in Assyria. Not only the two Roman officers but also his phylarchs might have caused some trouble, the same phylarchs who had earlier caused trouble for him at Callinicum. In this case, the circumstances would have given them a wider area for the display of their recalcitrance and insubordination. The nature of the expedition—a raid for booty—might have whetted their appetite for raiding and independent, irresponsible action, thus encouraging them to emphasize part of their assignment (to raid), while neglecting the other (to reconnoiter). In short, the expedition had elements that could have easily conduced to its miscarriage: a double assignment to pillage and reconnoiter, which thus made it possible for one to be emphasized at the expense of the other; and the dual composition of the army—Roman and Arab—put under the command of the Arab king, who, in addition to the

problem of controlling his own phylarchs, had now under his command two Roman officers, not unaware of their military competence. The control and coordination of all these elements and objectives constituted no mean task for the Saracen.

Much simpler than all these attempts at historical might-have-beens is the view set forth by Procopius himself in the *Anecdota*, that the expedition did not miscarry but performed what it had been called upon to perform: after successfully raiding Assyria, the Arab contingent went home, and the Roman troops rejoined the commander-in-chief. This, it should be remembered, is essentially what Procopius says in the *History* too. Only the accounts there are haunted by the ghosts of treachery as the motive that divided the two units, and further that the failure of Arethas to report to Belisarius resulted in a strategic check. Since it has been shown that the accounts of the campaign as dominated by the imputation of treachery are not a faithful reproduction of what had happened, it remains to show that Arethas cannot be accused of having failed to report since he was not instructed to do so, and that even if he failed to report, his failure could not have prevented the commander-in-chief from crossing the Tigris if he so wished.

It is possible to argue the points from the testimony of the *History* itself. From Procopius' accounts there, it is perfectly clear that Belisarius could not possibly have advanced and crossed the Tigris even if Arethas had come back and informed him on how matters stood with the Assyrians. On the state of the Roman army at this stage, Procopius says: "And since much time had been consumed by them in this siege, it came about that many of the soldiers were taken there with a troublesome fever."<sup>79</sup> The two elements of time and sickness, then, were determining factors in Belisarius' plans. He had promised the dukes of Syria and Lebanon to send them back to their provinces after the end of the sacred months' period, and this was fast approaching, as much time had been spent on the siege. The fever with which the army was afflicted was another important factor: the soldiers "became so ill that the *third part* of the army were lying half-dead."<sup>80</sup> Not only is it possible to show that Belisarius could not have crossed the Tigris in these circumstances, but also that he most probably had never intended to do so. The *Anecdota* is clear on this point, and "it is a document of which the historian is entitled to avail himself."<sup>81</sup>

However, the *Anecdota* will not be drawn upon since it is possible to show from the *History* itself that Belisarius' plans did not seriously contemplate crossing the Tigris. Both what was said—the rhetorical speeches—and what was done—two wretched sieges and an advance into Persian territory

<sup>79</sup> *History*, II.xix.31.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xix.32.

<sup>81</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 427.

that an unencumbered traveler could have accomplished in a day—testify to the validity of this view. Once this is established, then the role of Arethas in the campaign becomes clear. Having the mandate of the emperor to invade the land of the Persians and operating with the whole army of the Orient at a time when the Persian army was away in the north, Belisarius could not very well retire without fulfilling at least the letter of the emperor's mandate, and this was conveniently assigned to Arethas. Since the Arab horsemen would have remained idle at Sisauranon, they were sent to invade the land of the Persians. The Roman soldiers under John and Trajan were detailed too, so that the invasion could be described as one conducted by Roman troops on Persian territory and not merely a nomad raid by the Saracens. Finally, Arethas was most probably ordered after raiding to march back to Lebanon and Syria to meet the threat of a possible invasion by Mundir. This indeed might be a very safe inference as to the sequel of the raid. It will be remembered that the dukes of Syria and Lebanon were finally persuaded to stay after Belisarius had promised to dismiss them at the end of the sacred months' period, when the pagan Mundir was expected to resume his predatory activities against the provinces. This also tallies with the established fact about Arethas' assignment and appointment as king, which was specifically made to meet such a threat by Mundir. The established facts and the proposed explanations cohere.

Thus from the examination of the account of Procopius, the Assyrian campaign of Arethas emerges as a major military undertaking. Arethas probably commanded more than six thousand soldiers;<sup>82</sup> moreover, he was the commander-in-chief, and even the two Roman officers were ordered by Belisarius to obey him.<sup>83</sup> The expedition was another evidence of his contribution to the success of Roman arms in the second Persian war. He successfully executed a military operation in the nature of a desert raid against Persian territory, asserted Roman authority in faraway Assyria, and disembarrassed the Roman *magister militum*. Echoes of this success are expressed and implied in the *History*<sup>84</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Procopius calls his troops his "followers" (Ἀρέθας δὲ ξὺν τοῖς ἐπομένοις), perhaps somewhat derogatorily, on two occasions (*History*, II.xix.11, 27), while by contrast referring to the 1,200 troops under the two Roman officers as δορυφόροι (*ibid.*, 15) and as οἱ τῶν στρατιωτῶν μαχιμώτατοι (*ibid.*, 39). However, toward the end of the section he calls Arethas' troops an "army," στρατεύμα (*ibid.*, 48). At Callinicum, Malalas calls Arethas' contingent an "army," στρατός, numbering 5,000. Also in the *Anecdota*, Procopius uses στρατεύμα with qualification: στρατεύμα δὲ ἄλλο Ῥωμαίων, ξὺν γε Ἀρέθῃ τῷ Σαρακηνῶν ἄρχοντι (II.28). However, only 1,200 Roman guardsmen did not make an army; Arethas' contingent of 5,000 Saracens would have qualified as one.

<sup>83</sup> He appears more eager to fight the Persians than the two Roman dukes of Lebanon, who wanted to go home on the pretext that Mundir was about to attack their province; see Procopius, *History*, II.xix.33–34.

<sup>84</sup> *History*, II.xix.47.

and the *Anecdota*.<sup>85</sup> By doing so Arethas penetrated deeper into the territory of the great king than any Roman commander had done in this period, and thus he reminds one of what on a much larger scale had been done by his predecessor, Odenathus, against Shāpūr.

#### IV. THE CAMPAIGN OF 542

As stated above, one cannot believe that, except for the Assyrian campaign in 541, the Ghassānids were inactive during the other four campaigns of the second Persian war. Fortunately a medieval Christian writer, Agapius,<sup>86</sup> records the operations of 542 and the participation of the Arabs under Arethas: "La même année, un Arabe, Harith-ibn-Gabala, marcha contre les Perses. Comme Chosroès était frappé de ses ulcères, Harith attaqua avec ses troupes les Perses qu'il mit en déroute, détruisit plusieurs de leurs villes et fit beaucoup de captifs. Mais un des satrapes de Chosroès sortit ensuite contre les Arabes, les défit et leur reprit tous les captifs."<sup>87</sup> Although it might be thought that this was Agapius' version of the Assyrian campaign of 541, the historian specifically assigns this event to Justinian's sixteenth regnal year, and relates it to the plague that is known to have broken out in 542.<sup>88</sup> one may thus fit Agapius' passage into the events of 542. Also, examining Procopius' version of that year's campaign will reinforce the postulate that the Ghassānids took part. When news of the Persian invasion of Euphratensis became known, Belisarius hastened to the front and mobilized the army of

<sup>85</sup> *Anecdota*, II.28–29.

<sup>86</sup> Agapius (Maḥbūb) son of Constantine, bishop of Manbij (Hierapolis), wrote his *Kitāb al-Unwān* in Arabic in the 10th century. See the introduction by A. Vasiliev in PO 5, cols. 561–64; and for bibliography, Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 338.

<sup>87</sup> For this text and Vasiliev's French translation see PO 8, col. 431. Agapius emphasized the credibility of his sources (PO 5, cols. 565–66). For another text see L. Cheikho, ed., *Kitāb al-Unwān*, CSCO, ser. 3, vol. 5 (Louvain, 1912), 321, on Arethas' campaign.

There is a similar account in Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārikh* (Beirut, 1956), I, 450, where he derives it from the work of Ibn al-Rāhib, as he says on p. 449 (and not from al-Musabbiḥī or Abū Fanyūs, Epiphanius). For the *Tārikh* ascribed to Ibn al-Rāhib, see L. Cheikho, *Petrus Ibn Rabih, Chronicon Orientale*, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici* (1903), ser. 2, t. I, vol. 45. The quotation in Ibn Khaldūn on the campaign of 542 does not appear in Cheikho's text; Ibn Khaldūn must have used a better manuscript than that at the disposal of Cheikho, and he was closer in time and place to the 13th-century Ibn al-Rāhib. On Ibn al-Rāhib see Brockelmann, *GAL*, supp. I, 590; Graf, *GCAL*, II, 428–35; and Rosenthal, *HMH* (1968 ed.), 138. On the reservations of Graf on Ibn al-Rāhib and the relation of his work to that of al-Makīn, see Graf, *GCAL*, II, 432–33. What matters in this discussion of the campaign of 542 is the account itself, not its ascription to Ibn al-Rāhib.

<sup>88</sup> PO 8, col. 431. Although this event clearly is fitted into the year 542, Stein mistook it as belonging to the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war (*HBE*, II, 503 note 1), calling the account "inutilisable." For an account of the Persian campaign of 542, cf. Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 340–41.

Oriens; it is difficult to believe that the Ghassānids were left out.<sup>89</sup> Since in this invasion Mundir attacked Sergiopolis, the Ghassānids would not have hesitated when their enemy was attacking the shrine of their patron saint.<sup>90</sup> In this campaign Belisarius enumerated the ethnic groups in his army,<sup>91</sup> and the Arabs must have been represented. Set against this background, Agapius' account seems credible, even more so when Procopius is further examined.

Procopius speaks of Belisarius' dispatch of two Byzantine officers—Diogenes, a δορύφορος (guardsman), and Adolius son of Acacius, an Armenian *silentarius*—to cross the Euphrates with over a thousand horsemen to deter the Persians from crossing the river.<sup>92</sup> This resembles his previous year's dispatch of Arethas with the two Roman officers, John and Trajan. For a cavalry operation of such a kind in that terrain, the Arab *foederati* would again have been the ones chosen. Prejudiced as he was against the Ghassānids and Arethas, Procopius has omitted mentioning the Arabs, also providing indirect testimony that the previous year's tactic must have worked well or else Belisarius, who was not ill-disposed toward Arethas, would not have tried such a move again the next year.

Even Bury noticed the strangeness of Procopius' account of 542: "The account of Procopius, which coming from a less able historian would be rejected on account of internal improbability, cannot be accepted with confidence. It displays such a marked tendency to glorify Belisarius that it can hardly be received as a candid story of the actual transactions."<sup>93</sup> The Arab phylarch stole the show in the previous year's campaign, and Procopius probably suppressed all reference to him (and whatever success he had in 542, as in Agapius) in order to enhance Belisarius' reputation in 542.

#### V. PROCOPIUS AND MUNDIR

It was rightly observed that in his account of the second Persian war, Procopius is silent on the role of Mundir.<sup>94</sup> The observation deserves to be developed and explored; it is significant since it throws light on some important aspects of that war, involving Justinian, Chosroes, Mundir, and Arethas. Therefore, the references to Mundir will be collected and commented upon before general conclusions concerning these four figures are drawn.

<sup>89</sup> From Europum Belisarius ἐνθένδε τε περιπέμπων πανταχόσε τὸν στρατὸν ἤγειρε; Procopius, *History*, II.xx.25, 28.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xx.10–14. Chosroes also wanted ultimately to invade the Holy Land of Palestine, of which the Ghassānids considered themselves the guardians (*ibid.*, 18).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xxi.4.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 18–20.

<sup>93</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 106.

<sup>94</sup> Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 324.



### Mundir

References to Mundir may be divided into two main groups: those made in connection with the *Strata* dispute and those made in the course of the second Persian war (540–545). The first have already been analyzed in detail, and the striking feature has been noted—the dominant role that Mundir played in the dispute and in the international relations of the period.

The second group of references are in contrast to the first. These references are muted, and the Lakhmid king is given an attenuated presence.

1. The first mention of Mundir comes in the reply of the two dukes of Phoenicia Libanensis to Belisarius, during the campaign of 541. Rhecithancus and Theoctistus argue that Phoenicia Libanensis and Syria Secunda would be at the mercy of Mundir to plunder. Belisarius promises not to keep them more than sixty days—the period of the Arab sacred months.<sup>95</sup> Mundir is referred to again in connection with the two dukes when the sixty days had passed and Belisarius released them to return to their provinces.<sup>96</sup>

2. Mundir is again mentioned in connection with the siege of Sergiopolis<sup>97</sup> during the Persian invasion of Euphratensis/Commagene in 542. He thus took part in the invasion, just as his father, Nu<sup>c</sup>mān,<sup>98</sup> had done around the year 500.

3. Mundir and the Saracens took part in the siege of Edessa in 544, during which they were stationed to the rear of the besieging Persian army so that they might gather the fugitives after the capture of the city.<sup>99</sup>

These are the references that involve Mundir. Sometimes the reference is only by implication, as when the Saracens are referred to during the siege of Edessa, but the Persian Saracens could only have been those commanded by Mundir. So Mundir was in evidence, almost certainly in all the campaigns of the second Persian war but, as has been rightly observed, he is not given prominence nor a role as in the first Persian war.

### Chosroes

The question inevitably arises about this attenuated Lakhmid presence in Procopius' account of the second Persian war after such a vigorous and ubiquitous presence in the first, especially as the Lakhmid king does not seem to have suffered any diminution of his physical strength or bellicosity. Even ten

<sup>95</sup> *History*, II.xvi.17–19. The dukes' reply to Belisarius is remarkable for its spirit of independence vis-à-vis the *magister militum* of Oriens, and for its reference to Justinian's interest in the safety of Phoenicia Libanensis. On the Sacred Months, important in a cultural context, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>96</sup> *History*, II.xix.33–34, 39, 45–46. For the two dukes of Lebanon, see *PLRE*, III, s.vv.

<sup>97</sup> *History*, II.xx.10.

<sup>98</sup> See *BAFIC*, 121–25.

<sup>99</sup> *History*, II.xxvii.30.

years after the end of the second Persian war, he undertakes a major invasion of Oriens, after years of strife with Arethas, but this time only to fall at the battle of Chalais<sup>100</sup> in 554.

The key to understanding this mystery is the realization that Sasanid Persia was now under the rule of a new, young, and energetic king, none other than the famed and celebrated Anūshravān, "he of the immortal soul." The first Persian war was fought during the lifetime of a very old Persian king, Kawad, who could not lead his armies and in fact died of old age during the course of the war in 531, when Chosroes was confirmed king after some fratricidal struggle. The Endless Peace was concluded in 532, and after eight years of rule as king of kings, during which he consolidated his position, Chosroes was ready to lay down the gauntlet to Byzantium. Among other things, what distinguishes this war from the preceding one is that the Persian king took the field personally as commander-in-chief of his army and directed its operations every year of its five years of hard campaigning, in both the south and the north, in the Caucasus region. This was good publicity for the new king, and his military success only strengthened his grip over his realm.<sup>101</sup> It is also perfectly possible that he was partly responsible for the outbreak of the second Persian war. From the pages of Procopius, one gains the impression that this was forced upon him by the aggressive policy of Justinian in the East and in the West and the eloquence of the Gothic ambassadors in presenting their case.<sup>102</sup> This was valid enough, but in view of his youth and desire to win his spurs and launch a national war against the secular enemy, Chosroes most probably wanted the war to break out, and so it did. Once this is realized, then the image of Mundir in the war becomes clear, even before it was taken over and handled by the Byzantine historian of the war. The king of kings himself is "out for kudos" and naturally does not want his Saracen "kingling" to steal the show.<sup>103</sup> He does use him, however, in the *Strata* dispute to provide him with a pretext for breaking the Endless Peace, and the Arab king does just that. Once Mundir accomplished his task, he almost outlives his usefulness as a major partner in the war and is now reduced to the

<sup>100</sup> See below, 240–51.

<sup>101</sup> For Chosroes' image as a warrior see below, note 103.

<sup>102</sup> *History*, II.i.12–15, ii.1–15.

<sup>103</sup> Chosroes' envoy Abandanes' report on Belisarius clearly brings out the regal character of the war, when he says that it is beneath Chosroes to defeat a commoner, a "slave of Caesar," while it is a disgrace to be defeated by him (*History*, II.xxi.14). Chosroes' actions during the second war also indicate that he badly needed money; he must have come to the conclusion that a good way to obtain money was to wage war against the empire that had it. Some thirty years after the end of the second Persian war Chosroes was indeed beaten by the general Justinianus, a "slave of Caesar," at the battle of Melitene in 575; he then enacted a law that the Persian king should not go on campaign in person except against another king.

status of being in the Persian army, just another king under the supervision of the commander-in-chief, the king of kings himself.<sup>104</sup>

### Procopius

This is how the role of Mundir in the second Persian war was reduced not so much by Procopius but by the Persian king himself. However, the Byzantine historian found this grist for his mill and enlisted it for his *Kaiserkritik*. Chosroes is presented as a warrior king who takes the field personally and scores one success after another in the conduct of the war, to the point of capturing Antioch, the capital of Oriens itself. By contrast Justinian is presented as an armchair commander who stays in Constantinople.<sup>105</sup> The contrast is also applied to the client-kings of the two sovereigns, Chosroes and Justinian, respectively. Chosroes had at his disposal an efficient and reliable client-king who, after a distinguished role in the first Persian war, supplied his master with pretexts for breaking the Endless Peace which was what his master wanted, and who continued to serve his master in various capacities during the course of the war. Justinian, on the other hand, had an inefficient and unreliable client-king, Arethas, who appears only once in the campaign of 541, and when he does, he behaves irresponsibly and treacherously and cheats the *magister militum* of a resounding triumph in Assyria. The conclusion that the reader of Procopius could naturally draw is that the Persian ship of state was steered by a better helmsman. Mundir contributes directly and indirectly to the success of Chosroes the commander-in-chief, while Arethas contributes to the failures of the *magister militum*, Belisarius, and ultimately, Justinian. As Arethas was Justinian's appointee in 529, the emperor was responsible for the resulting disasters.

Procopius' *Kaiserkritik* and *Araberkritik* have been treated in detail in an earlier study.<sup>106</sup> The current reexamination of the conduct of Arethas in the second Persian war has added some significant new elements deriving from a closer look at (1) the *Strata* dispute of 539; (2) the Assyrian campaign of 541;

<sup>104</sup> In answer to Rubin's perplexity about Mundir's whereabouts, although he concludes that he and his Lakhmids could not have disappeared altogether. He supports this by saying that Chosroes' choice of the southern route that brought him to Antioch in 540 was an application of Mundir's strategy and could have worked only with Saracen cooperation (*Zeitalter Justinians*, 324). In addition to this true perception, analysis of Procopius' text has revealed Lakhmid presence on various occasions in the second war. For Mundir's strategy, including recommending that Kawad try to capture Antioch as early as 531, see Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.34-39.

<sup>105</sup> True, since Justinian never took the field except against the Huns in 559 (see Stein, *HBE*, II, 539-40, 818-19). Related to this may be the dispatch of his nephew Germanus to Antioch to oppose Chosroes; though the emperor was not present in person, a member of the imperial family was (see Procopius, *History*, II.vi.9).

<sup>106</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas."

(3) the campaign of 542, revealed by Agapius in *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān*; and (4) finally the role played by Chosroes himself as a commander-in-chief during the entire course of the second Persian war.<sup>107</sup>

## VI. APPENDIX

### An Arabic *Ekphrasis* of the Battle of Antioch, A.D. 540

What Chosroes did after his return to Persia from the campaign of 540 against Antioch and how he celebrated his victory is well known to Byzantinists from the pages of Procopius, who records his building of "Antioch of Chosroes," not far from Ctesiphon and modeled on Antioch on the Orontes.<sup>1</sup> What is not so well known to them is his commemoration of his victory at Antioch in a manner that has endured, however indirectly, till the present day.

On his return to Ctesiphon, Chosroes had that victory depicted in a mural—a mosaic or a painted relief, most probably the former<sup>2</sup>—which was placed on one of the walls of the throne room in his palace<sup>3</sup> in Ctesiphon where it could be clearly seen by his subjects and foreign dignitaries who visited his court. In the mosaic, he appears in all his glory, on horseback, leading his men in battle under the Persian flag.

After the fall of Sasanid Persia to the arms of Islam at the battle of Qadisiyya in 538, the palace, called *Iwān Kisrā* by the Arabs, was deserted and finally became a celebrated ruin near the new capital of the Abbasid caliphate, Baghdad, and as such it has survived, much diminished and dilapidated and known as *Ṭāq Kisrā*, the Arc of *Kisrā*. But the mosaic was still to be seen in the palace in the ninth century when an Abbasid poet, *Buḥtūrī*,<sup>4</sup> visited the ruins of the palace on which he composed a splendid ode, including an *ekphrasis*<sup>5</sup> of both the palace and the mosaic. Since then, the mosaic has disappeared, but it has survived indirectly, preserved in *Buḥtūrī*'s ode.<sup>6</sup>

When you behold the picture of Antioch, you are alarmed (as) between Byzantium and Persia,

<sup>107</sup> For more on Procopius and the Arabs, see below, 297–306.

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *History*, II. xiv. 1–4.

<sup>2</sup> Chosroes may have commissioned this mural after seeing examples of this art in Antioch itself. He is reported by Procopius to have carried with him back to Ctesiphon charioteers and musicians and also marbles, torn down from the cathedral of Antioch, which may have been sculpted; *History*, II. ix. 16, xiv. 2. But the Persians had their own artistic traditions, including sculpture, going back to Achaemenid times. The chances, however, are that the mural was a mosaic; glass tesserae were found during the excavation of the palace which confirm this view; see *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1983), III (2), p. 1064. Besides, the three colors referred to in the third verse of the *ekphrasis* attracted the attention of the Arab poet by their brilliance, and if the mural had been a painted sculpture, these colors would have faded after three centuries.

<sup>3</sup> For the palace, apparently built not by Chosroes but by *Shāpūr* in the 3rd century, see *ibid.*, 1062–65.

<sup>4</sup> On *Buḥtūrī*, see Sezgin, *GAS*, II. 560–64.

<sup>5</sup> For the latest on this attractive poetic genre, *ekphrasis*, with a good bibliography, see D. P. Fowler, "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of *Ekphrasis*," *JRS* 81 (1991), 25–35.

<sup>6</sup> The translation is that of A. J. Arberry, in *Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge, 1965), 75.

The Fates there waiting, whilst Anūshirwān urges on the ranks under the royal banner.

(Robed) in green over gold, proudly flaunting the dye of the (red) turmeric,  
And the press of men before him, all silent, lowering their voices,  
Some cautiously reaching out the foreshaft of a lance, some fearfully averting the  
spear-points with a shield.

The eye describes them as really alive, signalling like the dumb one to another;  
My doubt concerning them augments, until my hands explore and touch them.<sup>7</sup>

The mosaic of the battle of Antioch invites comparison, or rather contrast, with that of the battle of Issus, won by Alexander against the Persian king in 333 B.C. In that mosaic, the Persian king, Darius, is not victor but vanquished, although he is treated generously as he is depicted evincing concern for those of his followers who had fallen in order to enable him to escape.<sup>8</sup>

## D

### The War of the Federates (546–561)

**T**he Lakhmid-Ghassānid war, a conflict that continued for some fifteen years after the treaty of 545 concluding the second Persian war, has hardly been noticed by historians of Persian-Byzantine relations in the latter part of Justinian's reign. Although the war in Lazica receives most notice, the inter-Arab conflict deserves attention both for its own sake and for the light it throws on Persian-Byzantine relations.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Accounts of this war in the standard general histories of the period treat it as an episodic inter-Arab conflict with no relevance to the larger ongoing Persian-Byzantine war in Lazica in the 540s and 550s.<sup>1</sup> This is because of modern historians' dependence on Procopius, who dismissed this war in a paragraph that gives no names or exact data. Fortunately, Arabic and especially Syriac sources give a fuller and more accurate picture of this war, supplementing the

<sup>7</sup> Anūshirwān (Pahlevi Anūshravān) is Chosroes' nickname, "he of the immortal soul." "Over gold" in the third verse should be translated, according to one commentator on Buḥtūrī's *Dīwān*, as "riding on a horse that is caparisoned in a yellow or golden color."

<sup>8</sup> This mosaic, found at Casa del Fauno, and now in the Naples Museum, copies a painting by Philoxenos of Eretria. The painting was commissioned by Cassander after the death of Alexander and was carried off to Rome as part of the booty from the battle of Pydna in 168 B.C. when Perseus was defeated by Aemilius Paulus. So, like the mosaic of the battle of Antioch, Philoxenos' original painting was lost, and both have survived through other media—the artistry of the poet and the mosaicist respectively. For the mosaic of Casa del Fauno, see M. Bieber, *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art* (Chicago, 1964), 46–48.

<sup>1</sup> Omitted in Bury, *HLRE*, II; noticed briefly in Stein, *HBE*, II, 503, and Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 345, where both treat it as a private Arab war.



Greek source and giving the war more significance than the classicizing Byzantine historian does. Careful examination of the accounts of this war will show that it was by no means a minor inter-Arab affair, but rather an important conflict that balanced the one in Lazica. Thus in this period two sectors of the eastern front—Lazica in the north and the Arab one in the south—were operational; only the Euphrates front did not see action. What has been called the “imperfect war”<sup>2</sup> was made more so by the Arab inter-federate war.

To set in order the various phases of this Lakhmid-Ghassānid conflict, one must first set it against its general background.<sup>3</sup> It falls roughly into three five-year periods, between 545/46 and 561, punctuated by two truces: the first in 551 for five years (the post-Persian war truce of 545 having lapsed in 550), and the second in 557 with no limit set.<sup>4</sup> Thus one discerns the phases 545/46–550/51, 551–556/57, and 556/57–561, when the final peace was concluded.<sup>5</sup>

## II. THE FIRST PHASE, 545/46–550/51

Although Procopius’ account is limited, he remains the principal source for this first phase of the war.

And a little later Arethas and Alamoundaras, the rulers of the Saracens, waged a war against each other by themselves, unaided either by the Romans or the Persians. And Alamoundaras captured one of the sons of Arethas in a sudden raid while he was pasturing horses, and straightaway sacrificed him to Aphrodite; and from this it was known that Arethas was not betraying the Romans to the Persians. Later they both came together in battle with their whole armies, and the forces of Arethas were overwhelmingly victorious, and turning their enemy to flight, they killed many of them. And Arethas came within a little of capturing alive two of the sons of Alamoundaras; however, he did not actually succeed. Such, then, was the course of events among the Saracens.<sup>6</sup>

This passage is oddly placed in the *History*, coming as it does between the passage on the peace treaty of 545 and that on the third year thereafter when Chosroes began to scheme against the Byzantines,<sup>7</sup> and interrupting the narrative. It also gives no chronological indications or place names, nor does it

<sup>2</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 112; one might better say “imperfect peace.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 112–20; Stein, *HBE*, II, 503–16; Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 345–65.

<sup>4</sup> Bury, relying on Procopius, worked out the chronology of these truces; *HLRE*, II, 116–17, 120.

<sup>5</sup> Stein redated the peace from 562 to 561; *HBE*, II, 518 note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.xxvii.12–14, trans. Dewing.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xxviii.15–16. Nöldeke (*GF*, 18) wrongly dated this episode to 544, though it is clear from Procopius that it was after the conclusion of the truce in 545. See also Rothstein, *DLH*, 82.



give the names of the sons of the two Arab kings; it needs to be juxtaposed with the other sources. As it documents two distinct episodes, these will be treated separately.

The first, less serious episode involves a raid (ἐπιδρομή) during which Mundir captured a son of Arethas and sacrificed him to Aphrodite. This raid is not dated, just vaguely placed "a little later" (ὀλίγω δὲ ὕστερον) than the treaty of 545. Arethas' son is captured while engaged in a favorite Arab pastime, pasturing horses, animals in which the Ghassānids took pride, as is reflected in the Arabic poetry written about this dynasty.<sup>8</sup> The sacrifice of this son to "Aphrodite," the Arab al-'Uzzā,<sup>9</sup> reflects Mundir's well-known cruelty and paganism, manifested in this deliberate act instead of holding the young man for ransom. It also reflects the hatred between the two antagonist Arab kings and is in contrast with what Arethas was to do when another of his sons fell in battle in 554.<sup>10</sup> The next statement is curious, to the effect that because of this sacrifice incident "it was known that Arethas was not betraying the Romans to the Persians." This is a strange reason for exculpating Arethas from Procopius' charge of *prodosia*: the fact of the two Arab leaders' being at war itself gives a more cogent reason. Another and better one would have been Arethas' overwhelming victory over Mundir in 554, which Procopius knew about.<sup>11</sup> Until this paragraph Procopius has been giving his uncomplimentary picture of Arethas as an inefficient traitor; and for him to have made much of Arethas' forces putting an end to Mundir in 554 would have backfired on the credibility of that very picture, by which he sought to contrast Arethas' inefficiency and treachery with Mundir's prowess and loyalty.<sup>12</sup>

The second, more important episode involved not a raid but a real pitched battle. This bloody encounter, which ended in a resounding victory for Arethas, was fought with both sides' entire armies (στρατός). Procopius may here have been thinking of the encounter of 554 in which Mundir was killed, and it is possible to date this second part of Procopius' narrative to that year. His only dating element is the word "later, afterwards" (μετά), not even as precise as the preceding "a little later"; this might be referring to the later five-year period. In that case this passage would have been written after 554;<sup>13</sup> otherwise it still might refer to the phase before 550/51. Procopius' statement about Arethas' near capture of two of Mundir's sons is curious. Since the

<sup>8</sup> As kings, the Ghassānids received horses, not camels, as gifts; Nöldeke, *PAS*, 81. For Arabic poetry about their horses, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>9</sup> On al-'Uzzā (the classicizing Procopius' "Aphrodite") among the Arabs, see Fahd, *Le panthéon*, 163–82; cf. *BASIC I.2*, 722–26 on Mundir's attitude toward Christianity.

<sup>10</sup> See below, 243.

<sup>11</sup> He gives his reign a length of exactly fifty years (*History*, I.xvii.40).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 48; cf. "Procopius and Arethas," 373 note 1.

<sup>13</sup> For B. Rubin on this problem, see the Appendix below.

Byzantine historian was writing in Constantinople, he would have obtained his news of the Arab war from official dispatches, which, however, were not likely to have included such details: Arethas would not have reported his near-miss in such a fashion, and there would have been little reason to transmit such news to the capital. Procopius may have inserted these details to balance Arethas' victory by a failure, contrasted with Mundir's successful capture of a royal son in the first episode. Even while exonerating Arethas from the charge of treachery, he continues to employ the devices of *Araberkritikē* so as not to praise Arethas.

One may note the differing roles of the royal sons. The Ghassānid pastures the horses that were the mainstay of the famed Ghassānid cavalry contingent in the army of Oriens, while the Lakhmids take part in their father's losing battle. This is in the best traditions of the two groups. When sons take the field with their fathers, they are fighting not only Persia's and Byzantium's battles but also those of the royal houses of Ghassān and Lakhm. From these sons would be chosen the future phylarchs and successors to the Lakhmid and Ghassānid *Basileiai*. As Arethas must have fought beside his father Jabala, so 'Amr and Qābūs, the future kings of the Lakhmids, fought with their father Mundir.<sup>14</sup> Thus the animosity between the two royal houses was transmitted to the generation of their successors.

Five years after the conclusion of the truce of 545, negotiations began to renew it for another five years. After eighteen months of talks, such a five-year renewal was concluded in the autumn of 551. In both the preliminary and the conclusive phases the Arabs are explicitly mentioned, showing that the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war was far from being a private war between two independent Arab groups but rather was waged by them as *foederati* of Persia and Byzantium respectively, making the war part of the general Persian-Byzantine conflict that also involved Lazica in the north.

During the pre-truce negotiations the Persian ambassador Yazdgushnasp presented the Persian case to Justinian. In Procopius' words: "Now when this ambassador met the emperor for the first time, he spoke no word either small or great about peace, but he made the charge that the Romans had violated the truce, alleging that Arethas and the Saracens, who were allies of the Romans, had outraged Alamundarus in time of peace, and advancing other charges of no consequence which it has seemed to me not at all necessary to mention."<sup>15</sup> In the presentation of the Persian viewpoint the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war receives the lion's share, being the only part of the case

<sup>14</sup> Although, for example, Malalas and Michael the Syrian gave the names of the Ghassānid princes involved in Callinicum and Chalcis, Procopius does not give names here.

<sup>15</sup> *History*, VIII.xi.10, trans. Dewing; the ambassador was Yazdgushnasp, Procopius' "Isdigousnas"; *ibid.*, VIII.xi.4.

presented seriously and concretely, while other complaints, including those pertaining to Lazica, are left unmentioned by the historian. One notes the ambassador's statement that the Romans violated the truce because their ally Arethas had outraged Mundir. Clearly, since Arethas and the Ghassānids were Byzantium's allies (ἔνσπονδοι) and the Lakhmids were Persia's, the former's attack on the latter was tantamount to a Roman attack on Persia. Although war was going on in Lazica, it is not mentioned, and the Persians could easily have claimed that they were the injured party in that sector of the front.<sup>16</sup>

The federate war is also mentioned in relation to the final arrangements for the truce concluded in 551: "And it was only after long-continued debates that they finally reached an agreement that for five years the truce should be observed in the realms of both sovereigns, while envoys passed back and forth from each country to the other, fearlessly carrying on negotiations for peace during this period until they should settle the points of disagreement regarding both Lazica and the Saracens."<sup>17</sup> Procopius' words, clearly pairing the Lazican war with the Saracen, clinches the point that in this period the Lakhmid-Ghassānid conflict was not conducted privately between the two groups but concerned the two powers as much as did Lazica. It has not been considered so by modern historians<sup>18</sup> because of Procopius' dismissive treatment of it in his account of the Persian wars and because of his having referred to the truce of 551 in another part of his *History*, after the Gothic war when he was no longer observing geographical unity in composing his work. This results in references to the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war being shifted to the last book of the *History*, after five books of the Vandal and Gothic wars have intervened. Thus a clearer picture is achieved by bringing together what Procopius separated, in order better to locate the federate war in the context of the Persian-Byzantine conflict.

### III. THE SECOND PHASE, 550/51–555/56

#### The Battle of Chalcis, 554

Despite the truce of 551 that kept the Mesopotamian front quiet, the war in Lazica continued,<sup>19</sup> as did that in the southern sector between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids. This last five-year stretch saw the climax of all conflicts between these two Arab groups. In 554 the great encounter between the

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps because Lazica was not included in the truce of 545, and the war went on there.

<sup>17</sup> *History*, VIII.xv.2.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. above, note 1. Although Procopius indicates that the Arabs were included in the negotiations for the truce of 551, modern historians (Stein) have not noticed this in their own accounts (cf. *HBE*, II, 510), including the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," 373 note 1.

<sup>19</sup> For the Lazic war see Bury, *HLRE*, II, 113–20.

Lakhmids and the Ghassānids, in which Muṇḍir the Lakhmid was defeated and killed, took place in the plains of Chalcidicē in Syria Prima.

### The Syriac Sources

The principal source on this encounter, from which all others derive, is Michael the Syrian: "En l'an 27 de Justinianus, Mondar (fils) de Saqiqa monta dans le pays des Romains et ravagea beaucoup de régions. —Héret, fils de Gabala, le rejoignit, lui livra bataille, le vainquit et le tua, à la source de 'Oudayê (?), dans la région de Qennéšrīn. —Le fils de Héret, nommé Gabala, mourut, ayant été tué dans le combat. Son père l'ensevelit dans un martyryon de ce village."<sup>20</sup> Michael's account gives precise chronological, toponymic, and onomastic data, and relates events in a matter-of-fact way, leading one to infer that it derives from a documentary source. For his information on this period Michael depended on John of Ephesus, who was resident in Constantinople when he wrote his *History*. Since John's information must have come from a document that reached the capital announcing the victory of Byzantium's ally over her enemy, Michael has fallen heir to that information and entered it in his own *Chronicle* to form the basis of all later Syriac accounts. Such a document would have been sent to the emperor, who had appointed Arethas king. Thus, although the Syriac accounts are at second hand, one of them has preserved a chronological datum (which Michael does not), the month of the encounter, June 554.<sup>21</sup>

Michael's account, with its precise data, contrasts with Procopius' lack of exact places and dates. The Syriac narrative refers to Muṇḍir by his matronymic, "son of Shaqīqa," as does Procopius; both refer to Arethas by his patronymic.<sup>22</sup> This must reflect how official Byzantium referred to the two Arab kings,<sup>23</sup> another sign of a documentary source underlying the account. Muṇḍir is cited for attacking and devastating Roman territory, indicating that this was not a private war between two Arab groups but did involve imperial Byzantium. Muṇḍir, who in 529 had planned to attack Antioch,<sup>24</sup> was now deep in Byzantine territory, not far from Qinnasrīn/Chalcis in Syria Prima.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1899), II, 269; and for the Syriac text, *ibid.*, middle column, 323–24. See also *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, ed. J. B. Chabot, CSCO 81 (Paris, 1916), p. 200, lines 15–20.

<sup>21</sup> See *Chronicon Miscellaneum ad Annum 724 pertinens*, ed. E. W. Brooks, trans. J. B. Chabot, CSCO 3 (Paris-Leipzig, 1903), p. 111, line 7.

<sup>22</sup> *History*, I.xvi.1 and xvii.47.

<sup>23</sup> Unlike the Arabic sources, which give a variety of patronymics and matronymics for the two: Arethas is called "son of Māria/Mārya," "al-A'raj," and "Ibn Abi-Shamir"; Muṇḍir is called "son of al-Nu'mān," "son of Imru' al-Qays," and "son of Mā' al-Samā'." See *BASIC II*.

<sup>24</sup> See above, 79–80.

<sup>25</sup> See Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 274–76, on the place of Chalcidicē in the Byzantine defense system in Oriens.

One notes that the campaign took place in June, after the two sacred months were over, following the spring equinox.<sup>26</sup> The year 554 was militarily important, witnessing Justinian's great effort to expel the Persians from Lazica, which according to Agathias took fifty thousand soldiers.<sup>27</sup> The Persians may have asked their client-king to undertake this invasion of Oriens as a diversionary maneuver so as to lighten Byzantine pressure on the Lazic front. If the two operations were deliberately synchronized, this too would show that the federate war involved overlords as well as vassals.<sup>28</sup>

Arethas' swift march from either his base in Arabia or Jābiya in Palae-stina Secunda to Chalcis in Syria Prima shows his energy and sense of responsibility as supreme phylarch of Oriens, appointed by Justinian specifically to ward off Mundir's attacks. One notes that it was not the *dux* of Syria Prima but the phylarch of Arabia who rushed to the defense of Roman territory.<sup>29</sup> The last time Arethas and Mundir had met was in 539 during the *Strata* dispute. Apparently by now Arethas' jurisdiction had come to extend north of Palmyra as far as Syria Prima and the Euphrates region, giving evidence of Byzantium's confidence in his capability.<sup>30</sup> This energy was inspired not only by his phylarchal responsibility but also by personal motives arising from Mundir's capture and sacrifice of his son. One may easily imagine Arethas' eagerness to confront this blasphemous murderer (remembering also Procopius' account of Arethas' failed attempt at retaliation upon two of Mundir's own sons). The Syriac historian's language could suggest that Arethas killed Mundir with his own hands; if so, it would have been in a duel between the two antagonists, not unusual for pre-Islamic Arabs in war. The Lakhmid was very much the Ghassānid's senior, having been active in war since the beginning of the sixth century, almost twenty-five years before the attested beginning of Arethas' own career.<sup>31</sup>

Michael gives precise data on the site of the encounter, first locating it generally in the district of Qinnasrīn/Chalcis, then specifically "near the spring of 'Oudayē."<sup>32</sup> Although Michael's text of the toponyms presents some

<sup>26</sup> In attacking in June, Mundir confirms Belisarius' knowledge of Arab fighting habits and their avoidance of the Sacred Months (cf. Procopius, *History*, II.xvi. 18).

<sup>27</sup> See Stein, *HBE*, II, 511–12.

<sup>28</sup> This date of 554 is one of two certain dates in Lakhmid chronology in the 6th century, a valuable datum for historians of the Lakhmid dynasty; cf. Rothstein, *DLH*, 69, 71.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. his defense of the *Strata*.

<sup>30</sup> See Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 275, and below, 285–87. This is important for discussion of the Ghassānids' jurisdiction and their duties in the defense of Oriens vis-à-vis the regular Roman military establishment.

<sup>31</sup> Mundir must have been exceptionally warlike and vigorous to mount another far-ranging campaign after fifty years of warfare, at the age of over seventy, and against a younger antagonist; Procopius indeed calls him "the most difficult and dangerous enemy of all to the Romans" (*History* I.xvii.45).

<sup>32</sup> One notes that the battle took place near a spring, in keeping with the practice of Arab



problems, they are not significant. Unlike the variety of names in the Arabic sources, his account places the battle definitely in the Qinnasrīn/Chalcis area,<sup>33</sup> notwithstanding the various Arabic names given to the battle.<sup>34</sup> The best designation is to call it the battle of Chalcis, a definite appellation.

Both the name and the death of Arethas' son are worthy of note. He is called Jabala, Arethas' father's name, and was most likely the eldest son, since according to Arab custom the eldest son is named after his grandfather. At this stage he must have been a phylarch somewhere in Oriens, and must have joined his father in the campaign, anxious to avenge his brother's death at Mundīr's hands. As the eldest son, he was probably being groomed for the succession, and when he died in this battle it left the stage open for another son, Mundīr, whom Arethas was to recommend to Justinian when he visited the Byzantine capital in 563. Arethas' burying Jabala at a *martyrion* contrasts the religious practices of the two kings. Mundīr, a confirmed pagan, flaunts his hatred of Christianity by sacrificing a captured Ghassānid prince to the pagan goddess al-'Uzzā, defying Arethas' Christian faith. The devout Arethas buries his son not on the spot where he was killed, but in a *martyrion*, a Christian place of worship, implying that he died as a martyr, and that the Ghassānid victory was a Christian victory over the pagan Lakhmids.<sup>35</sup> The French rendering "ce village" translates Syriac *qastrā*, a loanword from Greek *κᾰστρῶν* (itself from Latin *castra*), meaning in Syriac too "a fort, fortified place."<sup>36</sup> It is not clear whether its antecedent is 'Oudayē or Qinnasrīn/Chalcis.<sup>37</sup> Since 'Oudayē is an unidentified place, obscure compared to Chalcis, it is more likely that the *martyrion* was in nearby Chalcis to which the Ghassānid host returned after the battle. In the Syriac text the word preceding the name Qinnasrīn is *kūra* (another loan from the Greek *κῶρα*), meaning the

desert warfare in which the Arab army would look for a water supply before encamping and deciding on a battle site. In his speech to the Persian king before Callinicum, explaining his concept of the Antioch campaign, Mundīr is made to say: "As for lack of water or any kind of provision, let no such thought occur to you; for myself, I shall lead the army wherever it shall seem best" (*History*, I.xvii.39). One would presume that Mundīr arrived first and chose a campsite near the spring 'Oudayē, where Arethas overtook him.

<sup>33</sup> Better than "at 'Oudayē," a place not yet securely identified. Since Michael locates it in Syria Prima, A. Musil's identification of it with al-'Edeje in Palmyrena should be rejected (*Palmyrena*, 144). Even the reading "'Oudayē" is not secure: the first letter may be not an 'ayn but a *bā*, hard to tell apart in some Syriac hands (see *BASIC* II).

<sup>34</sup> On the Arabic sources see *BASIC* II.

<sup>35</sup> The Christian character of Ghassānid victories over the Lakhmids is reflected in the Syriac sources, which salute the victory of Arethas' son Mundīr in 570 with the formula "crux triumphavit": see below, 345. The late 6th- or early 7th-century elegiac ode of Nābigha on Nu'mān echoes the description of a Christian funeral for a deceased Ghassānid prince, a poem that moved even the dour Nöldeke (*GF*, 38–39); see *BASIC* II.

<sup>36</sup> Although it is not reflected in the translation, Chabot understood it thus in the apparatus and notes (*Chronique*, II, 269 note 4); however, he translates it as "village."

<sup>37</sup> The force of the genitive with 'Oudayē in Syriac is not clear, as the toponym may be the name of the spring itself or that of a nearby locality that gave its name to the spring.



country around a city.<sup>38</sup> Juxtaposing the two terms *martyrion* and *kastron* also brings to mind the region of Chalcis, an area of monastic settlements where many of the monasteries were fortified.<sup>39</sup>

The date of the battle of Chalcis is important for Procopian studies as well as for federate history. In trying to determine the date at which Procopius' *History* breaks off, scholars have in general opted for 550/51.<sup>40</sup> This does not take into account the Alamoundaras passage<sup>41</sup> that may affect the chronology of Procopius' writings. In this passage Procopius evidences knowledge of a battle that took place in 554, and gives an accurate length of fifty years (504–554) for Mundir's reign.<sup>42</sup> The year of Mundir's death is given precisely by Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle*; thus the Syriac ecclesiastical historian brings forward the last event recorded in Procopius' *History* by a few years, as collation of the two passages makes clear. Hence the publication of Procopius' *History* cannot have preceded the terminus ante quem of 554.

#### The Greek Sources

Two sections of the *Vita* of Simeon the Younger (521–592) preserve important data about Mundir the Lakhmid and the battle of Chalcis.<sup>43</sup> They describe Mundir's paganism and the barbarities he committed against his Christian prisoners; a Byzantine peace embassy to Chosroes that Mundir opposed, threatening vengeance against the Christians of Oriens; his subsequent campaign against Oriens that terrorized the region; and St. Simeon's ecstatic vision of the battle between Arethas and Mundir, during which Simeon's prayers caused the Holy Spirit to strike Mundir down with a fireball, saving the day for Arethas and the Christians. The saint's disciples subsequently relate that what Simeon saw happen was confirmed by the victory report that reached Antioch and by survivors of the battle, who had invoked the saint during the fight and seen their prayers answered. Some of these soldiers remained as lifetime disciples of Simeon in Oriens, now made safe by the victory his intercession had brought about.

Notwithstanding the miraculous elements in this hagiographic account, the *Vita* provides valuable data on the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war in addition to

<sup>38</sup> It means both "district" in general and "the country around a city"; thus the battle took place either in the region of Chalcidicē or outside the town walls of Chalcis.

<sup>39</sup> Another possible identification is 'Oudayē = Budayya, a northern Syrian toponym attested in Islamic times; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>40</sup> Unlike others, Averil Cameron, in *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley, 1985), 225, is careful to say that the "bulk of the Wars was finished by 550/1." This leaves room for 554.

<sup>41</sup> *History*, I.xvii.40.

<sup>42</sup> Solidly established by Nöldeke, *PAS*, 170 note 1.

<sup>43</sup> See P. van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de Syméon stylite le jeune*, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 32 (Brussels, 1962), I, 164–66, secs. 186–87; II (Brussels, 1970), pp. 188–90.

the comparatively meager information in Procopius<sup>44</sup> and especially Agathias.<sup>45</sup> It also contains information on *Byzantino-arabica* not found elsewhere. Although the *Vita* is a contemporary source written by a member of a nearby religious community on the "Miraculous Mountain" near Antioch,<sup>46</sup> it has not been much noticed by historians of the period;<sup>47</sup> hence it will be analyzed in detail here.<sup>48</sup>

Some details of the picture of Mundir as a hater of Christianity presented in the *Vita* are new, such as stating that he tortured Christian prisoners and forced them to participate in the cult of demons. While some of this may be a *topos*, it is not out of character for someone who had sacrificed the son of his enemy to the Arabian goddess al-'Uzzā.<sup>49</sup>

The *Vita* recounts a Roman embassy to Chosroes' court not recorded by any other source. As this was a period of peace, following the truce of 551,<sup>50</sup> there might be some confusion. The event posited here might be an echo of the Ramla conference of the 520s, when Mundir had reviled Christianity.<sup>51</sup> However, there might have genuinely been an embassy at the stated time that simply was not recorded by other sources. If so, it would reflect the Byzantine government's concern over the course of the federate war, lest it escalate into a general war between the two great powers. This passage also reflects Mundir's importance at Chosroes' court, comparable to that shown by Procopius before the battle of Callinicum.<sup>52</sup> The hagiographic writer describes Mundir as a "giant," ἀνὴρ γιγαντιαῖος ὑπάρχων.<sup>53</sup>

In the next passage the writer recounts Mundir's terror-inspiring march upon Oriens, making it clear that the Lakhmid was invading Roman territory, coming to τὰ ὄρια τῶν Ῥωμαίων,<sup>54</sup> "the frontiers of the Romans" (the same term Procopius had used in describing the *Strata* dispute). St. Simeon

<sup>44</sup> Again on the problem of when Procopius' *History* breaks off, see above, note 40.

<sup>45</sup> On Agathias' silence on the Arabs see below, 255–58.

<sup>46</sup> See van den Ven, *Vie ancienne*, I, 101–8.

<sup>47</sup> While unknown to Nöldeke, it was noticed by Stein (*HBE*, II, 503 note 1) who, however, used the metaphorical version of the 10th-century *magistros* of Antioch, Nicephorus Ouranos (see van den Ven, *Vie ancienne*, I, 35–45). See the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas Again," *Le Muséon* 41 (1971), 321–25. For an Arabic version of the *Vita*, see J. Nasrallah, "Une Vie arabe de saint Syméon le Jeune (521–592)," *AB* 90 (1972), 387–90.

<sup>48</sup> Greek text and French translation in van den Ven, *Vie ancienne*.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. above, 237–38.

<sup>50</sup> See van den Ven's note in *Vie ancienne*, II, 190 note 1.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. above, 40–41. Did the compiler of the *Vita* of Simeon know of the same material used by the writer of the *Martyrium Arethae*?

<sup>52</sup> *History*, I.xvii.30–40 and xviii.1.

<sup>53</sup> *Vie ancienne*, I, 164, sec. 186, line 13. This is paralleled by a Syriac source's description of Mundir as *gabbārā*, "a mighty man, a giant"; *Chronicon Edessenum*, ed. I. Guidi, CSCO 3 (Paris-Leipzig, 1903), 32.

<sup>54</sup> *Vie ancienne*, I, 164, sec. 186, line 22.

then recounts his ecstatic vision, in which he is caught up in the Holy Spirit and finds himself on a small hill near the frontiers of the Persian and Roman Saracens, in the midst of the camp of soldiers and Saracens where Arethas the phylarch of the Romans had encamped: Ἐθεώρουν σήμερον ὅτι ἤρπάγην ἐν τῷ πνεύματι καὶ γέγονα ἐπὶ βουνοῦ τινος μικροῦ καὶ πλησίον τῶν ὁρίων Σαρακηνῶν, Περσῶν τε καὶ Ῥωμαίων, καὶ ἔστην ἐν μέσῳ παρεμβολῆς στρατιωτῶν καὶ Σαρακηνῶν, ἔνθα Ἀρέθας ὁ φύλαρχος Ῥωμαίων ἐστρατοπέδευσεν.<sup>55</sup> The same term for “frontiers” (τὰ ὅρια) is used here as was used previously to describe Mundir’s invasion. Here Arethas is making a stand at the Roman frontier which is called the frontier between two groups of Saracens, those allied to Persia and to Rome: he is facing his enemy, the Persian vassal, at a battle line between the two respective federate kings which is on Roman territory, in Chalcidicē. One notes also that the writer uses the correct term, παρεμβολή, for the federate camp:<sup>56</sup> the saint is ἐν μέσῳ παρεμβολῆς στρατιωτῶν καὶ Σαρακηνῶν. It would be overinterpreting to try and force a distinction here between στρατιώται, regular Roman soldiers, and federate soldiers (σύμμαχοι), as in any case the former did not take part in the inter-Arab battle of Chalcis, though perhaps some accompanied the Ghassānid federate army. The best translation would be “in the middle of the camp of the Saracen soldiers.”<sup>57</sup> Interestingly, the topography of the Chalcis battlefield is described as featuring a hill (βουνός) in Greek, while the Arabic and Syriac sources place the battle near a spring of water.<sup>58</sup> Combining these features may help to identify the site.

While Simeon’s account of the victory’s having been won by the Holy Spirit’s fireball may not be accurate,<sup>59</sup> it nonetheless reflects the religious nature of the war. Since Arethas was a Rhomaic federate and a zealous Christian, the Holy Spirit aided his Christian army against the pagan Mundir and the huge cavalry force with which he charged. The victorious Arethas, who buried his fallen son in a Christian *martyrion*, saw the war in these terms.

A significant passage in the *Vita* relates that the week following the battle of Chalcis news of the victory and of Mundir’s death reached Antioch. The text uses the term ἐπινικία,<sup>60</sup> a “victory bulletin.” News of the victory

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 165, sec. 187, lines 1–5.

<sup>56</sup> See *BAFIC*, 212–13.

<sup>57</sup> This expression appears to be just a hendiadys.

<sup>58</sup> See above, 242.

<sup>59</sup> One notes the phrase πνεῦμα δυνάμεως, “the Spirit of power,” to describe the Holy Spirit (*Vie ancienne*, I, 165, sec. 187, lines 12–13). After Constantine had militarized the image of the Second Person of the Trinity, so now in this *Vita* is the image of the Third Person. The Ghassānids saw the three Persons of the Trinity as symbols of power, recalling the way the martyr Arethas of Najrān spoke of vanquishing his persecutor Yūsuf with the “power of Christ.” In the South Arabian inscription, Christ is called *Ghālib*, “the victorious”; see *BASIC II*.

<sup>60</sup> *Vie ancienne*, I, 165, sec. 187, line 19.

would have been relayed to the *magister militum* in Antioch and thence to Constantinople. The news is detailed, specifying the day and moment when Mundir fell.<sup>61</sup> The passage goes on to relate that τινες ἐκ τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ στρατοπέδου,<sup>62</sup> soldiers from the Roman camp, came to St. Simeon's monastery and told the monks that when hard pressed in the battle they had invoked the aid of Simeon whose prayers saved them. They spoke of a hill near the battle site, as the saint had described it in his vision. Some stayed to become Simeon's lifelong disciples. These soldiers were Arab *foederati* who, having been saved in a traumatic battle, followed the path of the holy man whom they had called upon as a protector.<sup>63</sup> This report confirms the Christian spirit that pervaded the federate army of Arethas. Arabic sources too confirm the Greek account of their invocation of the holy man: the ode of Nābigha on the Ghassānids in battle describes how they invoked Yasū' (Jesus) and Ayyūb (Job),<sup>64</sup> together with an uncertain "Du'miyy." For this last, who should also be a Christian religious personage, one might emend the text to read perhaps either Sim'an (Simeon), which would scan, or Sarjis (Sergius).<sup>65</sup>

The hagiographic account concludes by stating that from then on peace prevailed in Oriens, which is borne out. The battle of Chalcis gave the Ghassānids a decisive edge over the Lakhmids, and from 554 until the death of Arethas fifteen years later the region indeed was peaceful,<sup>66</sup> until Arethas' son and successor, Mundir the Ghassānid, defeated Kābūs the Lakhmid, son of Mundir, on Easter of 570.

To sum up: the *Vita* of Simeon testifies to the importance of cavalry in the battle of Chalcis, alluding to the great numbers of the Lakhmid horsemen and implying that the same was true of the Ghassānids. It also suggests that the aggressive Mundir attacked first and broke the Ghassānid ranks before

<sup>61</sup> The passage using the term ἐπινικία was noted by M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory* (Cambridge, 1986), 195 note 32. On the victory bulletin of Chalcis see below, 248–49.

<sup>62</sup> *Vie ancienne*, I, 165, sec. 187, line 22. This phrase should be understood as referring to federate Saracen soldiers and not regular Roman *stratiōtai* (cf. above, note 57); both Procopius and Michael the Syrian clearly mean this. Compare the hagiographer's phraseology, using the verb ἔνθα Ἀρέθας ὁ φύλαχος Ῥωμαίων ἐστρατοπέδευσεν and the noun τινες ἐκ τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ στρατοπέδου, confirming that it is the federate Ghassānid troops in question here. The *Vita* also relates that Arabs from the Peninsula outside the *limes* also used to come to Simeon from τῆς Ἰουδαίας χώρας (*Vie ancienne*, I, 176, sec. 201, lines 1–2).

<sup>63</sup> Compare Nu'mān the Lakhmid, and Aspebetos, who chose the religious life after a military career; *BAFIC*, 161–64, 181–91.

<sup>64</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>65</sup> A later Muslim commentator thought the three names in Nābigha's verse were those of Christian monks; Simeon indeed was one. For "Sarjis" as an emendation for "Du'miyy," see *BASIC II*.

<sup>66</sup> As understood by John of Ephesus; see below, 341. His statement, however, does not exclude clashes between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids that punctuated the peace: compare Theophanes' report of Arethas' visit to Constantinople in 563. However, the Lakhmid power was contained by Ghassānid military superiority.

being struck down. On the human plane, it was Arethas' stand with his elite troops that would have absorbed the shock of Mundir's charge; this repeated his action at Callinicum where he made a stand after the initial reverse. The Ghassānid virtue of *ṣabr* came to the rescue.<sup>67</sup> The Arabic Ode of 'Alqama, written perhaps about Arethas in just this battle,<sup>68</sup> gives the idea that here too after an initial reverse Arethas made his stand. To locate the battle site the historian must combine the hill of the Greek source with the spring of the Syriac and Arabic sources.

### *Epinikia*

The reference to ἐπινικία in the *Vita* of Simeon the Younger<sup>69</sup> in connection with the battle of Chalcis makes one ask how such news was conveyed, what victory celebrations may have followed the battle, and so on. On these points evidence from contemporary Arabic poetry that bears on the battle and the Ghassānids is of complementary value.

### *The Victory Bulletin*

Our evidence for the battle between the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids leads to the inference that victory bulletins were sent to Antioch, to Jābiya in Gaulanitis, and to Constantinople. Procopius made Mundir out to be Rome's most dangerous enemy for fifty years during which he often damaged the Roman *limes*.<sup>70</sup> To counter his continual invasions of Oriens, Justinian appointed Arethas the Ghassānid to the extraordinary *Basileia* and made far-reaching changes in the structure of the phylarchate of Oriens. Both *imperium* and *ecclesia* suffered from Mundir, whose enmity to Christianity has often been mentioned. This final battle against him was fought not outside the *limes* in Arabia, but on Roman soil in Syria Prima, not far from Oriens' capital, Antioch. A battle marking the end of this scourge of Oriens surely would have called for a victory bulletin. The *Vita* of Simeon testifies to such a bulletin (ἐπινικία) reaching Antioch. After the victory, one of direct concern to Byzantium, veterans of the battle came to Antioch, as reported in the *Vita*. Perhaps it was they who bore the news to the *magisterium militum*, as would have been normal practice. As Constantinople was involved with these events, such a bulletin would have been dispatched there also. In addition, Justinian was personally interested in the fate of Mundir, to fight whom he had reorganized Oriens and appointed Arethas, and he would have seen his good judgment confirmed in Arethas' satisfying victory. Although no such document has survived, one

<sup>67</sup> See above, 137 with note 392.

<sup>68</sup> On the Ode of 'Alqama see *BASIC II*.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. above, 246.

<sup>70</sup> *History*, I.xvii.40–48.

may be inferred from Procopius' mention of Mundir's death, in a *History* passage written in the capital and assumed to have derived from documentary evidence. One may also add John of Ephesus, also resident in Constantinople when he recorded the victory, whose information was preserved by Michael the Syrian.<sup>71</sup> John, moreover, a Monophysite writer, was interested in recording this victory by a Monophysite dynasty that had been instrumental in reviving the Syrian Monophysite church in the 540s. Michael's preserving the detail that Arethas buried his fallen son Jabala in a *martyrion* must come from this early source stratum. The victory bulletin that reached Constantinople may also have included some such data as have found their way into the hagiographical account in the *Vita* of Simeon.

Historians have so far enumerated eight victory bulletins that preceded celebrations of victories during Justinian's reign;<sup>72</sup> to this list one may add that of the battle of Chalcis in 554. Only one actual text of such a victory bulletin has survived, that of Heraclius after the battle of Nineveh in 628, which mentions the Saracens (the Ghassānids).<sup>73</sup> Of course they figured in the Chalcis one as well.<sup>74</sup>

### *The Victory Celebrations*

While one may assume that a victory bulletin reached Constantinople, it is not as easy to speak of a victory celebration either in the capital or at Antioch. As the victory had been won by a devout Monophysite force, those two cities under strict Chalcedonian patriarchs<sup>75</sup> would not have been inclined to celebrate the fact. The battle of Chalcis was won only a year after the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, which had failed to placate the Monophysites and unite the East. The imperial capital and the chief city of Oriens would not have held it appropriate to make much of the victory of a heretic. Arethas personally, however, may have been honored by an invitation to Constantinople, possibly for having the patriciate conferred on him, much as the consulate was conferred on Belisarius after his triumph over the Vandal Gelimer.

In the Ghassānid capital of Jābiya, though, things were different. A

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Michael's preservation of Arethas' encounter with Ephraim, *BASIC* I.2, 746–55.

<sup>72</sup> See McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 64–68.

<sup>73</sup> For analysis and description see *ibid.*, 70–72. For reference to the Saracens (Ghassānids), see *Chronicon Paschale* (Bonn ed.), p. 730, lines 8–9; and cf. below, 642.

<sup>74</sup> They may well have appeared in the victory announcements. Compare the participation of Ghassānid cavalry in the battle of Daras in 530 and the memorial, an equestrian statue (McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 64). They were to be mentioned in Heraclius' victory bulletin in 628 and may well have been in this one as well. Compare the victory of 421 as discussed in *BAFIC*, 26–36.

<sup>75</sup> Domnus III, patriarch of Antioch 546–559, and Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople 552–565.



victory bulletin must have been sent there also.<sup>76</sup> Although no Byzantine source mentions either a bulletin or a celebration in the Gaulanitis,<sup>77</sup> one may make inferences from Arabic sources to posit some celebration of the victory both in Arab style<sup>78</sup> and in the context of Christian arms, though the festivities would have been muted by the death in battle of the crown prince Jabala. Since the days of Queen Mavia in the fourth century<sup>79</sup> Byzantium's Arab *foederati* had had the tradition of composing epinician odes for military victories, while the *ayyām*, the battle-days of the pre-Islamic Arabs, called forth poetry on both sides. This most famous of all sixth-century battles between Byzantine and Persian federate Arabs can be expected to have produced victory odes. Indeed, one of the most famous odes of the corpus of pre-Islamic poetry was probably addressed to Arethas on just this occasion.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the Arabic prose sources speak of the dispatch of two swords called *Mikhdam* and *Rasūb* to an Arabian shrine by a Ghassānid king named Ḥārith (Arethas). These are probably the same two swords that appear in the aforementioned ode. One may infer that, on the occasion of his victory over his inveterate enemy, Arethas thankfully offered his swords *ex voto*.<sup>81</sup>

The Ghassānids had lived in Byzantine territory for over a half century. As *foederati* and as zealous Christians they had assimilated much from both the Byzantine *imperium* and its *ecclesia*, especially in matters pertaining to war and its conduct.<sup>82</sup> It is possible, therefore, to speak of the antecedents and the sequel to the battle of Chalcis in the Byzantine idiom.

1. Arethas was technically the phylarch of Arabia, and his seat was Jā-biya in Gaulanitis in Palaestina Secunda. It is there that news of the sudden invasion of Chalcidicē by Mundir in 554 must have reached him. It is, therefore, not difficult to speak of a Ghassānid *profectio bellica*,<sup>83</sup> a departure from

<sup>76</sup> In the Monophysite centers of Oriens it must have been announced as a victory for the Monophysite church; compare Mundir the Ghassānid's victory in 570 being hailed, according to a Syriac chronicle, with the phrase "crux triumphavit." This victory over the son of Mundir the Lakhmid is seen as a triumph of the (Monophysite) Cross.

<sup>77</sup> The victory would have been announced and celebrated in other Ghassānid military camps in Oriens, even if it was not marked by *gaudia publica* in the capital; cf. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 234.

<sup>78</sup> One may compare the celebrations in Umayyad Damascus for the Arab Muslim victory over Visigothic Spain in 711; see P. K. Hitti, *A History of the Arabs* (London, 1970), 496–97.

<sup>79</sup> Reported by Sozomen (cf. *BAFOC*, 443–46). Greek ecclesiastical historians of the 6th century disliked the Ghassānids and did not report such celebrations. Literary evidence on the celebration of Monophysite military victories, specifically the Negus' campaigns in South Arabia in the 520s, is provided by the *Book of the Ḥimyarites* and the *Martyrium Arethae* (see *Martyrs*, 219–26).

<sup>80</sup> See *BASIC II*.

<sup>81</sup> For the two swords see *BASIC II*.

<sup>82</sup> On Jabala's Roman tactics cf. above, 65.

<sup>83</sup> For the *profectio bellica* of later times, see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 249.

Jābiya on that occasion, for the long march to distant Chalcidicē with perhaps prayers for the success of his campaign against the infidel Munḍir. An Arabic verse from one of the odes of Nābigha, later in the same century, speaks of the oath the poet swore, that victory (*naṣr*) would attend Ghassānid arms, after he had heard that the Ghassānid contingent began its march against the enemy.<sup>84</sup>

2. It is not extravagant to speak of the "liturgy of war" before the battle of Chalcis was joined. Arethas had fought in the Byzantine army of Oriens in two Persian wars and was, of course, a witness to, and participant in, such liturgies before the battles.<sup>85</sup> When he fought Munḍir alone at Chalcis there is no reason to suppose that the liturgy of battle was discontinued. The phylarch was a zealous Christian whose soldiers, according to the *Vita*, invoked the aid of St. Simeon the Younger in the course of the battle.

3. It is also possible to speak of Arethas' return to his capital, Jābiya, after the great victory as a Byzantine *adventus*, an entry followed by a liturgy in the Ghassānid church at Jābiya,<sup>86</sup> both a memorial liturgy for the dead princē Jabala and a thanksgiving one for the victory granted Arethas.<sup>87</sup> What else the victorious phylarch would have done to celebrate his victory after his return is not clear. He might have constructed some church or monastery as a pious deed to reflect his gratitude or performed the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, not far from his seat in Gaulanitis. His strife with another phylarch in Palestine,<sup>88</sup> which took place most probably immediately after the battle of Chalcis, could attest his presence in Palestine, although what exactly he was doing there cannot be determined with certainty.

#### IV. INTER-PHYLARCHAL STRIFE IN ORIENS: THE *VITA EUTHYMII*

In his *Vita Euthymii*, Cyril of Scythopolis provides valuable data for *Byzantino-arabica* when he describes the strife that broke out between two phylarchs allied to Byzantium—Arethas and Aswad—in the period 544–555. This passage comes in the middle of a section<sup>89</sup> telling of Euthymius' healing of a possessed Saracen in the desert of Juda: during a drought the Saracen had

<sup>84</sup> See BASIC II. On oaths related to victory in Byzantium, cf. McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 236 notes 26, 27.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 249–51.

<sup>86</sup> On the Ghassānid church in Jābiya and that of Arethas' son Munḍir, see BASIC I.2, 827. On the imperial *adventus* see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 232–33.

<sup>87</sup> On thanksgiving services and commemoration of those fallen in battle, see *ibid.*, 252.

<sup>88</sup> See below, 252–55.

<sup>89</sup> Schwartz, *Kyrrillos*, p. 75, lines 7–11. For the French translation of the *Vita Euthymii* see A. J. Festugière, *Les moines d'Orient* (Paris, 1962), 130–31, "Vie de Saint Euthyme." For an English version see R. M. Price, trans., *Cyril of Scythopolis: The Lives of the Monks of Palestine* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1991), with bibliography on pp. 284–85.

broken the door of the monastery cistern.<sup>90</sup> The unstable conditions furnished by the strife of the two phylarchs brought about the situation in which the Saracen could thus do damage to the monastery:<sup>91</sup> τῶν δὲ δύο φυλάρχων τῶν ὑποσπόνδων Ῥωμαίοις Σαρακηνῶν Ἀρέθα καὶ Ἀσουάδου κατ' ἀλλήλων ἀσπόνδως κινουμένων καὶ ἀκαταστασίας οὔσης βάρβαροι διασπαρέντες κατὰ τὴν ἔρημον ταύτην πολλὰ ἀθέμιτα ἔπραξαν, ἅπερ ἴσασιν οἱ πολλοί.<sup>92</sup>

This brief but valuable passage gives a rare glimpse of the history of inter-phylarchal relations.<sup>93</sup> It poses numerous problems of identification of the parties and locality involved and of the causes behind the phylarchal encounter. It has not escaped earlier scholarship that the Arethas of this passage is Arethas the supreme phylarch.<sup>94</sup> The other, Ἀσουάδος (al-Aswad, "the black"), is most likely to have been a Kindite, although this name also appears in Ghassānid genealogies.<sup>95</sup> He could not have been a phylarch of the Palestinian Parembole, Euthymius' usual group, as Cyril names this personage ca. 550 as Terebon II.<sup>96</sup> He would not have been a Ghassānid, whose phylarchal assignments are known; and intra-Ghassānid rivalry is less likely than that with another group. This leaves the third federate group, the Kindites: note that Cyril expressly designates the people involved as ὑπόσπονδοι. Qays' *hēgemonia* recalls the Kindite presence at this time.<sup>97</sup> Where one ought to look for the name Aswad is not so much in Kindite genealogies as in earlier sixth-century history, when an Aswad (argued to have been a Kindite) fought as a phylarch of the Romans with Areobindus in 502/3 after Kinda and Byzantium had become allies.<sup>98</sup> Did the figure of the 550s derive his relationship with Byzantium from the new treaty of ca. 530, involving Qays?

In asking where the strife described by Cyril took place, one opts for Palestine rather than Arabia. Aswad appears to have been a comparatively minor provincial figure who would not have crossed the boundaries of his own

<sup>90</sup> On the miraculous element in the passage involving the Saracens, cf. *BAFIC*, 201, and B. Flusin, *Miracle et histoire dans l'oeuvre de Cyrille de Scythopolis* (Paris, 1983). In addition to the earlier remarks, it might be noted here that *Vita Euthymii*, sec. 57 refers to a certain Ἀχθάβιος, a presbyter in the *koinobion* of St. Euthymius, who came from a village ἀπὸ Βητκααβέων (Betakabeis), twelve miles from Gaza. His name is probably Arabic (or Aramaic?), *Akhṭab* or *Aḥṭab*, as is that of his village (formed with the element *Bēḥb-*). He has a brother with a Latin name, Romanus. If he was an Arab, Achthabios would be another Rhomaic Arab ecclesiastic known in Oriens, and his village another Arab village in the region.

<sup>91</sup> After being cured of demonic possession, the Saracen was baptized.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. above, note 89.

<sup>93</sup> On inter-phylarchal strife in Oriens in the 5th century, see *BAFIC*, 111–12.

<sup>94</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> Hishām, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 619.

<sup>96</sup> See *BAFIC*, 190–91.

<sup>97</sup> As noted by Nöldeke, *GF*, 17 note 2.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. above, 20. Perhaps Cyril's Aswad was the grandson of the earlier one.

jurisdiction to attack the powerful Ghassānid in the latter's own province of Arabia. One recalls the unrest in Palestine in the 530s described by Choricus in his encomium of Summus<sup>99</sup>—a Ghassānid-Kindite encounter between Arethas and either Qays or a successor of his.<sup>100</sup> While Summus had been on the scene at that time to reconcile the warring parties, there was no such mediator in the 550s, and “implacable” (ἀσπόνδως) strife broke out to disturb Palestine.

To ascertain the causes of this conflict, which are unstated by Cyril, one must first correctly date it. E. Schwartz opted for the period 544–553,<sup>101</sup> but E. Stein redated it to as late as 555,<sup>102</sup> an important extension. One recalls that Cyril speaks of drought in the region during this time,<sup>103</sup> a perennial cause of conflict in Arab life; compare the events of 536, when drought-driven pastoralists attacked Euphratesia.<sup>104</sup> This, though, seems to have been more local in scope. Another factor may have been whether Qays the Kindite was still alive or had been succeeded by a phylarch willing to try his power against that of the powerful Ghassānid. There are, however, no data on this. One returns to the fact of Arethas' elevation to the supreme phylarchate of Oriens and the disgruntlement this seems to have aroused; compare the Usays inscription, the account of the battle of Callinicum, and Choricus' evidence, all showing the tensions created in Oriens by Arethas' being given the *Basileia*. Since Palaestina Prima, with its special position, was most probably not included in Arethas' sphere of influence,<sup>105</sup> a recalcitrant phylarch in that area would have challenged him to assert his authority, over and above its special appeal to him as the region holiest to this devout Christian soldier.

With regard to redating the strife described by Cyril to 554/55, one recalls that up to that time Arethas was occupied in the north of Oriens, first in the Persian war and then in the final battle with Muḍir. One then looks for what would have brought him to Palestine when Muḍir was dead and that struggle over. First of all one recalls the strong religious dimension of the devoutly Christian Arethas' war with Muḍir and his army's invoking the aid of a patron saint. The Ghassānid may well have made a vow that if he won and put an end to Muḍir he would go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in thanksgiving, as mentioned above.<sup>106</sup> This would have brought him to Pal-

<sup>99</sup> See above, 185–86.

<sup>100</sup> This too could help show that the Aswad of the *Vita Euthymii* was a Kindite.

<sup>101</sup> *Kyriillos*, 259, s.v. Ἀρέθας.

<sup>102</sup> See E. Stein, “Cyrille de Scythopolis, à propos de la nouvelle édition de ses oeuvres,” *AB* 62 (1944), 169–86, esp. 174–76 on the dating of the phylarchal conflict.

<sup>103</sup> *Kyriillos*, 75 (*Vita Euthymii*), lines 6–7.

<sup>104</sup> See above, note 89.

<sup>105</sup> Noted by Stein, *HBE*, II, 297 note 2.

<sup>106</sup> See above, 247. On Christian Arab pilgrimages to the Holy Land in pre-Islamic times,

estine and into conflict with Aswad. Second, another Samaritan revolt broke out in 555.<sup>107</sup> Since the Samaritans were always suspected by Byzantium of collaborating with Persia, and had earlier been also suspected of coordinating their 529 revolt with an attack by Persia's ally Mundir,<sup>108</sup> a connection with Mundir's attack in 554 might be posited, at least from the Byzantine side.<sup>109</sup> In this connection Simeon the Younger's involvement in the Samaritan revolt of 555 may be examined. A letter from him to the emperor has survived, asking Justinian to punish the rebels for their impious vandalizing of the Church of the Theotokos in Porphyreon in Phoenicia.<sup>110</sup> As the Ghassānids had invoked Simeon's aid in the battle of Chalcis, he may well have asked them to help in quelling the Samaritans. Arethas, who had already lent his aid in the earlier Samaritan revolt of 529, would have welcomed the chance to conduct holy war in the Holy Land itself. This may have been another factor drawing him to Palestine, where he quarreled with Aswad.

Remarks are in order here on Cyril the hagiographer and his image of the Ghassānids. The data on inter-phylarchal strife he presents are incidental to his purpose, which is telling the story of a miraculous cure by a holy man.<sup>111</sup> Here again is an example of how data on Arab-Byzantine relations have to be extracted from texts of many unrelated genres. One also discerns the nuances of how Cyril presents the picture of Arethas. He initially calls him the phylarch of the Saracens, faith unspecified, by way of contrast to later in the story when he states that a certain Saracen (Tha'laba, who brought the possessed man to Euthymius' monastery) was Christian.<sup>112</sup> Though it is known from many other sources that Arethas imposed law and order on his phylarchs and in the Arabian desert and brought an end to the Lakhmid threat to Oriens, Cyril presents him as a troublemaker. While calling a rather obscure phylarch of the Preamble "most celebrated,"<sup>113</sup> he mutes his reference to the far more prominent supreme phylarch.

Thus Cyril's prejudice is clear and therefore needs to be explained.<sup>114</sup> The

see *BASIC* II. On the popularity of pilgrimage to Jerusalem in this period, see Price, *Cyril of Scythopolis*, xxii–xxvi.

<sup>107</sup> Stein, *HBE*, II, 374.

<sup>108</sup> See above, 89–91.

<sup>109</sup> There are some chronological difficulties here. While Cyril left the Lavra of Euthymius in February 555, the Samaritan revolt did not break out until July of that year; there may, however, have been suspicions about it before then. On dating see Stein, *HBE*, II, 374 note 2, presenting the conflicting source data.

<sup>110</sup> See P. van den Ven, "Les écrits de S. Syméon Stylite le jeune avec trois sermons inédits," *Le Muséon* 70 (1957), 2–3.

<sup>111</sup> See Flusin, *Miracle et histoire*.

<sup>112</sup> *Kyrrillos*, p. 75 (*Vita Euthymii*), line 13.

<sup>113</sup> See *BAFOC*, 190.

<sup>114</sup> For Arethas in the novel on Arabia, see above, 197–98. For a recent work that dis-

reason must certainly have been the two different confessional affiliations of the hagiographer and the phylarch. Palestine was strongly Chalcedonian, especially that monastic establishment presided over by St. Euthymius and St. Sabas; and so was Cyril. It must have been intolerable for him to see the elevation of a staunch Monophysite to the position of supreme phylarch in Oriens. The image of the supreme phylarch became even dimmer and more odious to Chalcedonian Cyril after the former had secured the resuscitation of the Monophysite ecclesiastical hierarchy around 540. After leaving the monastery of St. Euthymius, Cyril entered that of St. Sabas. The latter, when he made the journey to Constantinople just before his death, had refused to pray for the fertility of Empress Theodora lest she should give birth to an heir to the throne, tainted with the Monophysite heresy.<sup>115</sup> Cyril's antipathies toward Arethas, the protégé of Theodora, become amply understandable.

#### V. THE THIRD PHASE, 556/57–561

##### The Silence of Agathias

The historian of the sixth decade was Agathias,<sup>116</sup> a contemporary who wrote a detailed history of a few years on a large scale; and yet he has nothing, absolutely nothing, on the Arabs. In the case of the second phase, there was Michael the Syrian to fill the gap created by the termination of the *History* of Procopius around 550. In this third phase there is no such historian to supplement the gap in *Byzantino-arabica*. This does not mean that there was nothing to record. The crushing defeat of the Lakhmids in 554 could not have been followed by a period of peace but of retaliatory wars to avenge the death of Mundir, and indeed the Arabic sources speak of such encounters.<sup>117</sup> This of course would have followed 554 but could have spilled over to the third phase. The truce of 557 would not have prevented the Lakhmids from mounting such retaliatory offensives since even after the Peace of 561, which specifically included the Arabs and enjoined them not to engage in inter-Arab warfare, the Lakhmids did violate it. They attacked soon after 561, and before 563 when Arethas visited the capital and complained.<sup>118</sup> Menander, the

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cusses the factors that "have had an effect in forming Cyril's presentation of people, places, events and controversies," see C. J. Stallman-Pacitti, *Cyril of Scythopolis: A Study in Hagiography as Apology* (Brookline, Mass., 1991).

<sup>115</sup> Kyrillos, pp. 173–74 (*Vita Sabae*), sec. 71.

<sup>116</sup> The text of Agathias has been edited by R. Keydell, *Agathiae Myrinaei Historiarum Libri Quinque*, CFHB (Berlin, 1967), II. A companion volume to this is the English translation by J. D. Frendo, vol. II A, 1975. For the latest study of Agathias, see Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970), on which this chapter heavily draws.

<sup>117</sup> See Ibn al-Athir, *al-Kamil* (Beirut, 1965), I, 542, where he speaks in his account of the Yawm Halima encounter of the march of Mundir's son against the Ghassanids to avenge the death of his father.

<sup>118</sup> On this, see below, 282.



author who took up the narrative where Agathias left off, suddenly provides much material on the two warring Arab groups.<sup>119</sup> Finally, Agathias was writing a detailed contemporary history of this decade on a large scale,<sup>120</sup> and this raises the expectation of some reference to the Arabs, even if peripheral, incidental, or circumstantial, and yet there is none.

It is, therefore, possible to draw the conclusion that Agathias neglected or omitted to record Arab-related events, and this receives considerable fortification from an examination of the second phase. In that period occurred the great battle of the war, the battle of Chalcis, reports on which reached Antioch and Constantinople where Agathias was working, and yet there is not a word on it or any other event related to it. Why does the *History* of Agathias have nothing whatsoever on the Arabs?

There is no doubt that the main reason is Procopius, and the explanation comes from Agathias himself. In the preface to his *History*, he says his theme is "the relations between Rome and most of the barbarians from the time reached at the end of Procopius's *Wars* to the present day."<sup>121</sup> Although he asserts his independence from Procopius occasionally,<sup>122</sup> there is no doubt, as far as the Arabs are concerned, that Procopius was the dominant influence.

1. Procopius dismissed the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war of this period in a paragraph and relegated it to the status of a war waged between two groups of Saracens that did not concern Byzantium and Persia. It was natural for Agathias to consider this war as falling outside his terms of reference. For this period Procopius concentrated geographically on Italy, the last phase of the war against the Goths, and Lazica, where the war against Persia was conducted, and Agathias followed him scrupulously in this and thus excluded the Arabs.

2. Furthermore, Procopius' image of the Arabs possibly discouraged Agathias and disinclined him from taking an interest in the Arabs as he did in the Persians and the Franks.<sup>123</sup> The Arabs were a group of barbarians, and that perception even extended to the Persians and *a fortiori* to the Arabs. Consequently the Arabs offered Agathias no attraction to include them or digress about them as he did about the Persians.

3. The fact that he wrote his *History* in the 570s is an important key to understanding his silence. This was a period of eclipse for the Arabs who lived under a cloud, as Ghassānid-Byzantine relations were ruffled during the reign

<sup>119</sup> See below, 312–14.

<sup>120</sup> His *History* consists of five books covering 552–559, a period of only seven years.

<sup>121</sup> Cameron, *Agathias*, 131.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–37.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 116–17.

of the Ghassānid Muḍīr, the contemporary of Justin II and Tiberius, when the Ghassānids appeared in the Byzantine perception as rebellious and treacherous federates.<sup>124</sup> Agathias probably could not conceive of them in the 550s in a different light. Furthermore, the Ghassānids were Monophysites, and that was another negative feature that must have dimmed further the image of the Arabs in the perception of the Chalcedonian Orthodox historian writing under Chalcedonian emperors.

4. All this becomes clearer when contrasted with his attitude to the other group of barbarians—the Franks in the West. In spite of their being barbarians, they were orthodox and allies of the orthodox *autokrator* against the Arian Lombards. He devoted to them an excursus, and the insertion of this curious excursus on the Franks is well described, in sharp contrast to Agathias' own presentation of them in the body of his narrative, where they are treacherous and indeed sinful. The glorification of the Franks in the excursus is entirely unrelated to the *History* as a whole. It runs counter to Procopius' hostile picture of the Franks in the *Wars* and (more important) to Agathias' own views about barbarians in general. It is clear that this ill-fitting insertion was stimulated not by its relevance to the main subject matter of the *History* so much as by Byzantine hopes of Frankish aid in the early 570s, when Agathias was writing book I. He failed to realize that his excursus represented an attitude toward the Franks that belonged to a time twenty years after the events of his main narrative.<sup>125</sup> The contrast with the Franks should adequately explain the silence of Agathias on the Arabs in the 550s: for him they were a rebellious, heretical group in the 570s.

5. Finally, Agathias was much more interested in literature than in history, and this is relevant to his silence. "Unlike Procopius, no political motive drove him to write, but instead a strong literary enthusiasm," and he "wrote history only on the reflection that it was after all very like poetry."<sup>126</sup> So Agathias did not have the true historical curiosity of a Herodotus, in spite of the two digressions on the Persians and the Franks, which were special cases.<sup>127</sup> If such were his tastes, then his silence on the Arabs becomes intelligible; the Arabs were understandably outside the range of his interests, hence their non-inclusion in his work.

Agathias' *History* has been described as "a political history which is short

<sup>124</sup> See the section on the reign of Muḍīr, below, 331–37. On Agathias' favorable attitude toward the Franks because of the political situation in the 570s, see Cameron, *Agathias*, 120–21.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 11, 31; see also the chapter on Agathias as the editor of the *Cycle*, *ibid.*, 12–29.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 36. Averil Cameron devoted a long article to the study of his excursus on the Sasanids; see "Agathias on the Sassanians," *DOP* 23–24 (1969–70), 67–183.

on politics, a classical history which had to accommodate Christian motivation, a military history written by a lawyer."<sup>128</sup> All these facts militated against his including the Arabs in the five books of his *History*. But the most important fact that explains the silence of Agathias on the Arabs was no doubt Procopius and the image he projected of them in his *History*, especially in the last dismissive paragraph of his work which consigned them to irrelevance and marginality in the imperial scheme of things.<sup>129</sup>

The years that separate 545 from the Peace of 561 are as arid as many others in Byzantine historiography on the Arabs and Arab-Byzantine relations. A historian such as Agathias, who devoted five books to cover the short period from 552 to 559, would have filled this gap with significant details, which would have illuminated many aspects of the Lakhmid-Ghassānid relationship and with it the Persian-Byzantine one; witness the flood of light that has been shed by the single statement in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian on A.D. 554. But Agathias, unfortunately, was the continuator of Procopius, who bequeathed to his disciple the broad lines along which the history of the period was to be written, mainly in Lazica and Italy and not in Oriens. This legacy of Procopius prevented Agathias from being interested in Oriens and recording whatever might have happened between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids; in so doing he was evidencing the influence of Procopius on the course of Byzantine historiography in this period. What a gain for Ghassānid history it would have been, if Agathias had had different signals from Procopius on the Arabs and so had written an excursus on the Arab *foederati*, as he had on the German Franks!<sup>130</sup>

#### Greek Inscriptions on Arethas

Excavations at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, the Umayyad palace southwest of Palmyra, have revealed two Greek inscriptions involving Arethas.<sup>131</sup> This palace was built on the site of a former Monophysite monastery, of which three cisterns, a lintel, and a tower remain. The inscriptions were carved on the lintel that had formed part of the monastery gate but was re-used as a thresh-

<sup>128</sup> Cameron, *Agathias*, 37.

<sup>129</sup> *History*, II.xxviii.12–14.

<sup>130</sup> Procopius described the armor of the Franks and their manner of fighting, as did Agathias, following him some twenty years later. If he had described the Ghassānids as he had done the Franks, it would have been a gift to the historian of Arab-Byzantine relations, whose sole source for the armor of the Ghassānids derives exclusively from contemporary Arabic poetry, which will be discussed in *BASIC* II. For Procopius and Agathias on the Franks, see B. Bachrach, "Procopius, Agathias and the Frankish Military," *Speculum* 45 (1970), 435–41; for the description of their weapons, see pp. 436–37.

<sup>131</sup> First edited by D. Schlumberger, "Les fouilles de Qaṣr el-Heir el-Gharbi (1936–1938), *Syria* 20 (1939), 366–72; republished by Jalabert-Mouterde, *IGLSYR*, V (Paris, 1959), pp. 240–43.

old in the Umayyad structure. These two inscriptions<sup>132</sup> confirm the Ghassānid phylarch's ranks and titles, as they are known from the literary sources, and thus are of great importance for Ghassānid history. The text and translation of the first inscription are given by Jalabert-Mouterde (*IGLSYR*, V, 2553B):

Ἐν ἀνόματι	—[ἐπὶ τ.δ.]—
τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμ-	ἀρχημ[αν]δ<ρίτου> καὶ
ὄν Ἰησοῦ Χριστο-	τοῦ εὐλαβ(εστάτου) Ἀνεστασί(ου)
ῦ, σωτήρα τοῦ κό-	διακό(νου) καὶ τῆς φυλαρχίας
σμου, ὡ ἔρων <τῆ>-	τοῦ ἐνδοξωτάτου Ἀρέθας·
ν ἁμαρ[τίαν τοῦ κόσμου]	στρατέ (?) ἵνα ὁ δε<σ>πότης
	Θεὸς ὅταν ἔρχη(ται), τ(α)μῆ(?) μ-
	ετὰ δοξιῶν(?)

Au nom de notre Père Jésus-Christ, sauveur du monde, celui qui efface le péché (du monde)—(sous un tel) archimandrite et le très pieux Anastase, diacre, (au temps où) le très illustre Aréthas était phylarque. Qu'il combatte, afin que, quand le Seigneur Dieu viendra, il soit classé avec ceux qui sont à droite!<sup>133</sup>

The inscription was set up in the time of an archimandrite whose name has not survived and a deacon named Anastasius; it is dated by the phylarchy of the *endoxotatos* Arethas. His status as king and supreme phylarch was thus so well known among his fellow Monophysites, whose cause he had so zealously served, that the term of his phylarchy was used as an eponymous dating criterion in Oriens.<sup>134</sup>

As the Ghassānids were great builders, especially of monasteries,<sup>135</sup> Arethas may have in some sense been a patron of this monastery and contributed some funds to its construction. Although his proper province was Arabia and his capital was Jābiya in Palaestina Secunda, as far away as Heliorama<sup>136</sup> in Phoenicia Libanensis his phylarchy is being used as a dating criterion, particularly in this Monophysite religious context: the inscription expressly uses the noun φυλαρχία, showing that this term was associated with its famous

<sup>132</sup> The two inscriptions were not engraved simultaneously; a few years separate them.

<sup>133</sup> The French version in *IGLSYR*, V, p. 243.

<sup>134</sup> On eponymous dating criteria and era designations as employed by the Arabs to date events in their history, cf. Ḥamza, *Tārikh*, 118–20. To these the *phylarchia* of Arethas may now be added, and in this case it was not only the Arabs but also the Monophysites of the monastery who dated events with reference to the Ghassānid *phylarchia*.

<sup>135</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 825–41. The Ghassānids are associated with building monasteries rather than churches. As hardy warriors, they must have admired the asceticism of the monks, who chose for their habitation the desert, the home of the Arabs; the Ghassānid limitrophe was not far from the desert.

<sup>136</sup> For the identification of the site of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī with Heliorama, see *IGLSYR*, V, pp. 239–40.

bearer.<sup>137</sup> Arethas is referred to *tout court* without any other title, a reflection of his fame as “the” Arethas.<sup>138</sup>

The Christian tone of the inscription’s phraseology is clear, even though Jalabert-Mouterde’s interpretations might be improved upon. After an invocation of Christ, Arethas is (apparently) wished blessings or the like “until the Lord God comes in glory.” This inscription provides epigraphic confirmation of the religious dimension of the wars of the Ghassānids, documented in the literary sources.<sup>139</sup> The Ghassānid phylarch is supported by the prayers and invocations of his *ecclesia*. Though nothing is explicitly stated beyond the use of Arethas’ *phylarchia* as a dating criterion, the setting up of the inscription by an archimandrite and deacon might in some way have been connected with the victory of 554. He is explicitly styled *endoxotatos*, *gloriosissimus*, as seen in Syriac sources indirectly<sup>140</sup> and here confirmed in epigraphic Greek.

The second inscription is on the same lintel (IGLSYR, V, 2553D).

[+φλ(αουίου)] Ἀρέθα πατρικίου	(+À Flavius) Aréthas,
[πολλ]ὰ τὰ ἔτη, ζωή. Μέ-	patrice, longues années,
[γας], καλὸς ἔλθης·	vie! Grand, beau tu es
[ὦς (?)] καλὸς ἔ<λ>θης, Ἀ[ρέθα (?)]	venu! (Combien [?]) beau
—————τοῦ + ᾠϞϜϞ—————	tu es venu, ô Aréthas (?)
	. . . l’an 870 . . . <sup>141</sup>

In the first line the editors restore the *gentilicium* Flavius for Arethas on the basis of its epigraphic attestation for his son Mundīr;<sup>142</sup> his father Jabala’s appellation Aşfar was a calque of “Flavius.”<sup>143</sup> This title, Flavius, may be seen as a link with the imperial family in Constantinople, harking back to Constantine the Great.<sup>144</sup> Even more important, this inscription attests to Arethas’

<sup>137</sup> The attestation of φυλαρχία in the inscription gives the *coup de grâce* to the view that the *phylarchia* of the Ghassānids was simply the tribal chieftainship. The construction of a monastery on Byzantine territory would not have been dated by the chieftainship of an Arab sayyid. Cf. P. Mayerson, “The Use of the Term *Phylarchos* in the Roman-Byzantine East,” *ZPE* 88 (1991), 291–95. The first extant attestation of the term goes back to the 5th century, when Aspebetos, the well-known phylarch of the Palestinian Parembole, was endowed with the *phylarchia* of Arabia; see *BAFOC*, 40.

<sup>138</sup> This would recall how the Usays inscription terms Arethas *al-malik*, “the king.” Cf. above, 123–24.

<sup>139</sup> See *BASIC* II for the Arabic sources.

<sup>140</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 14, also giving the epigraphic attestation of the title *endoxotatos* for his son Mundīr. In his study of these two inscriptions, A. Alt (“Eine Huldigung für den Ghassaniden-fürsten Arethas,” *ZDPV* 67 [1945], 261) gave *illustrissimus* as the equivalent of *endoxotatos*.

<sup>141</sup> *IGLSYR*, V, p. 244.

<sup>142</sup> See below, 495–96.

<sup>143</sup> See above, 63.

<sup>144</sup> On Flavius see above, 66–67.

patriciate in Greek, a rank attested in Syriac and recorded later by Theophanes.<sup>145</sup> The chronicler, however, mentioned him as holding it in 563, and here, by this inscription's being expressly dated to Seleucid Era 870 = A.D. 558/59, it is brought back four to five years.<sup>146</sup> The inscription seems to acclaim a visit to the monastery by Arethas, bearing out the later Arab historian Ḥamza's account of Ghassānid interest in monasteries.<sup>147</sup>

Six years after the *editio princeps*, A. Alt<sup>148</sup> pointed out that the formula used here is that attested in the *De Cerimoniis* for greeting a newly appointed patricius: καλῶς ἦλθες, ὁ δεῖνα πατρίκιε τῶν Ῥωμαίων. Even more than the greeting πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη, this suggests that the patriciate had recently been conferred on Arethas, not as far back as at the time of his appointment to the *Basileia* (529) as once thought.<sup>149</sup> If this conferment did take place shortly before 558/59, it may well have been a reward for the signal service to Byzantium done by Arethas' defeat of Mundir in 554.<sup>150</sup> One may thus date the conferment of this rank between 554 and the phylarch's visit to the monastery four to five years later when he was greeted with the patriciate acclamation. Note that the other inscription, that dated by his *phylarchia*, does not style him *patricius*, thus perhaps dating it earlier.

## VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This is the period of what has been termed the "imperfect war."<sup>151</sup> With equal or even more truth it might be termed the "imperfect peace," as it was punctuated by three truces and punctured by continual warfare in the northern sector, the Caucasus, and in the southern sector, Oriens.

1. The course of the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war ended with a signal victory for Ghassānid arms in 554, which should be recognized as a landmark in the history of the federate wars of this century. It came a quarter century after the appointment of the Ghassānid Arethas to the extraordinary *Basileia* in 529 and was the crowning justification of that appointment by Justinian, as the distinguished phylarch fulfilled the emperor's expectations. So 554 should be related to 529, separated by Procopius and left unrelated to each other.

2. In the history of Lakhmid-Ghassānid relations it was not only an isolated, smashing victory but one that turned the tide in favor of the

<sup>145</sup> See below, 282.

<sup>146</sup> Alt ("Eine Huldigung," 261 note 3) considered the dating "vielleicht richtig," whereas Jalabert-Mouterde (*IGLSYR*, V, p. 244) take it as given.

<sup>147</sup> On Ḥamza see *BASIC* II.

<sup>148</sup> Alt, "Eine Huldigung," 261, drawing on *De Cerimoniis*, as taken over by Jalabert-Mouterde (*IGLSYR*, V, p. 241).

<sup>149</sup> Chrysos, "Title," 49 note 131.

<sup>150</sup> See above, 240-51.

<sup>151</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 112.



Ghassānids for a long time to come. Henceforth their star is in the ascendant and with it Byzantine prestige in the Diocese of Oriens, the Semitic Orient, and the Arabian Peninsula.

3. Contrary to what Procopius says in his evaluation of this Lakhmid-Ghassānid encounter, this was not merely an inter-Arab military engagement but a federate one, waged by the two *foederati* of Persia and Byzantium. The two powers may not have helped the two federates physically and materially<sup>152</sup> as Procopius says, but this does not mean that the war was unrelated to the Persian-Byzantine conflict.

4. Within this new context for understanding the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war, waged while the war in Lazica was going on, the service of the Ghassānids to the Byzantine war effort may be summarized as follows. (a) They protected Byzantine Oriens from the devastating incursions of Mundir; (b) they committed the Lakhmid contingent in the Persian army to the south of Oriens and prevented it from taking part in operations in Lazica in the north; (c) and finally, they won a crushing victory over the Lakhmids in 554, thus giving the Byzantines the edge over the Persians in Oriens. All these are significant elements in evaluating the war of this period, which thus relieve it of the marginal interest that Procopius assigned to it and unite it with the war in Lazica, in the general Byzantine war effort in the East, in the second half of the reign of Justinian.

5. As has been pointed out by Procopius himself, the historical significance of the war in Lazica, which might appear marginal, was not really so.<sup>153</sup> It prevented a Persian breakthrough to the shores of the Black Sea.<sup>154</sup> By their containment of the strong Lakhmid contingent in the Persian army and its commitment to the south of Oriens, the Ghassānids contributed their share to the preservation of Lazica as a Byzantine sphere of influence against Persian designs toward its annexation.

## VII. APPENDIX

### B. Rubin on the Lakhmid-Ghassānid War

In a long note on a short paragraph in his text, B. Rubin<sup>1</sup> discussed the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war, with a special reference to my brief treatment of it in the fifties which

<sup>152</sup> In Procopius' words, "they waged a war against each other by themselves, unaided either by the Romans or by the Persians" (*History*, II.xxviii.12, trans. Dewing).

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, VIII.vii.10-13, discussing the ulterior motives in Chosroes' desire to capture Lazica.

<sup>154</sup> After Bury, *HLRE*, II, 120, see Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien*, 53-54. For the most recent evaluation of the place of Lazica (and Suania) in the Byzantine defense system of the Caucasian frontier, see C. Zuckerman, "The Early Byzantine Strongholds in Eastern Pontus," *TM* 11 (1991), 527-53.

<sup>1</sup> See Rubin, *Zeitalter Justinians*, 345, and 517 note 1124.

stimulated interest in this war. In addition, he used the occasion for expressing his views on the problem of Arethas' *prodosia* and Procopius' handling of the career of Arethas. I should like to draw his attention to the following.

## A

1. My views on Procopius and his handling of the career of Arethas in his *History* do not rest on the short paragraph I wrote on the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war and a footnote; they rest on what I wrote on Procopius and Arethas in connection with the two major wars of the reign of Justinian in Oriens, namely, the first and the second Persian wars, for which there is ample documentation, unlike this Lakhmid-Ghassānid war. These views are expressed at length in two long articles which were written some thirty years ago.<sup>2</sup> Since then more evidence has accumulated which only goes to confirm the conclusions expressed in the two articles, and this evidence has been presented and discussed in the course of this volume. These views are not affected by what I said on the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war and Procopius' treatment of it, which is peripheral to the *prodosia* theme involving Arethas in the works of Procopius.

2. In spite of this, the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war is important in itself and also in its reflection of Procopius' prejudice against Arethas, although this is expressed more lightly and subtly than in his account of the two Persian wars.<sup>3</sup> After more than thirty years, the evidence for this Lakhmid-Ghassānid war has increased, as the chapter in this volume fully indicates; hence the desirability of returning to Procopius and to Rubin's views written some thirty years ago.

a. My identification of the victory that Arethas scored over Mundir, mentioned by Procopius, with Yawm Haḷīma was made with the clear qualification that this is not a certainty but a *possibility*. And it is still a possibility that can be entertained. So I did not unknowingly advance the date of the battle mentioned by Procopius ten years.

b. Rubin maintains that Procopius' Persian War was published early in the 550s<sup>4</sup> and so he could not have included mention of Arethas' great victory over Mundir in 554. Whatever the truth about the date of publication may turn out to be, this is irrelevant to the problem of the image of Arethas in the two Persian wars. The crucial evidence for Procopius' insincerity, even mendacity, as far as Arethas is concerned, is the passage in the first book in which he introduces the two antagonists, Arethas and Mundir, singing the praises of the latter and the vices of the former. This long passage<sup>5</sup> purports to be written *before* 554, and yet there is decisive evidence that that passage was certainly written *after* 554. For in that passage, Mundir's long reign is accurately given as fifty years since he reigned from 504/5 to 554 when he died, killed in the battle with Arethas. Furthermore, the insincerity of Procopius is crystal clear in the passage. In spite of the fact that he wrote it fully aware of the victory of Arethas

<sup>2</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ* 50 (1957), 39–67, 362–82.

<sup>3</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.xxviii.12–14. My treatment of this passage in Procopius appears in "Procopius and Arethas," 372–73.

<sup>4</sup> In Rubin's calculations (p. 517 note 1124), the publication date of the *History* was 554.

<sup>5</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.40–48.

over Mundir and his loyalty to Byzantium, he says that "for as yet we know nothing certain about him," giving the impression that he is still writing around 530 when Justinian conferred the *Basileia* on Arethas.

c. Thus Rubin's inaccurate views on this Lakhmid-Ghassānid war and his unawareness of Procopius' mendacity in the crucial passage, discussed in the preceding paragraph, make him think that the argument advanced against Procopius and the false image he drew of Arethas would fall.<sup>6</sup> Two more of his statements should be corrected. He speaks of the publication date of the *History* as 554 and concludes that reference to Arethas' victory of 554 would not have been possible. But as has been shown, when Procopius wrote the first book, he knew of Arethas' victory in 554; hence suppressing reference to it can only have one interpretation related to his prejudice against the Arab client-king. He also thinks that Procopius did not neglect to refer to the Saracens and that he referred in Book VIII, x.10 to the tensions that led to the battle of 554 in Chalcidicē.<sup>7</sup> Procopius' reference in that book does not relate to the battle of 554; it relates to the tensions and encounters between Arethas and Mundir during the first phase, which led to the truce of 551. Procopius is completely silent on the events of the second phase, which led to the battle of 554.

d. It is difficult for a Byzantinist who is unfamiliar with Arab history to treat adequately the purely Arab dimension of the history of the Ghassānids or Arab-Byzantine relations, in spite of good intentions. His judgment has necessarily to be dependent and derivative. Rubin reveals his good acquaintance with professional Arabist and Orientalist works on the Arab profile of Byzantine history, as is clear from his long endnotes and the chapters he devoted to the Arabs. Yet in this case it is surprising that he should refer to J. Schleifer's brief and old article which appeared in the old edition of the *EI* and neglect the extremely competent works of T. Nöldeke and G. Rothstein, the two German specialists on the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, who have treated the victory of 554 with great expertise and professionalism.<sup>8</sup>

## B

Finally, Rubin's general views and conclusions on the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war deserve a few comments.

a. After saying of Arethas' victory, recorded by Procopius, that as a result "die römische Sache im Limesgürtel der Wüste neuen Auftrieb erhielt," he goes on to say of the much more important and decisive victory of 554 that "die Großmächte nahmen offiziell keine Notiz von diesen Plänkeleien in ihrem Wüstenglaciis." That the

<sup>6</sup> Although he seems to qualify it by seeming to concentrate on my treatment of the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war and Procopius' handling of it as expressed in a long note ("Procopius and Arethas," 373 note 1). Hence his singling this note out by saying "(namentlich 378, *Ann.* 1)" (378 is a misprint for 373). As has been pointed out, the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war is not central in the *prodosia* theme elaborated by Procopius.

<sup>7</sup> In Rubin's documentation, the citation of the passage in Procopius has "x," a misprint for "xi."

<sup>8</sup> See Nöldeke, *PAS*, 170 note 1, and *GF*, 18–19; Rothstein, *DLH*, 83–87. Nöldeke returned to the Arabic verse supposed to be related to the battle in *Fünf Mo'allaqat* (Vienna, 1899–1901), I, 72–73.

two statements are somewhat contradictory is not important; what is important is the second statement on the battle of 554, which may be wholeheartedly rejected. This is the battle that witnessed the death of Byzantium's most deadly enemy for some fifty years, according to Procopius. The long passage in the *History* on him and the danger he posed to Oriens is eloquent enough and supported by other sources. The death of an antagonist such as Procopius describes could not have passed unnoticed in Byzantium. The hagiographic source speaks of the news arriving in Antioch, and it is practically certain that a victory bulletin was relayed from Antioch to Constantinople—to Justinian himself,<sup>9</sup> who appointed Arethas specifically as a counterpoise to Mundir around 530. The battle was fought not in the *Wüstenglacis* of Byzantium but in Syria Prima not far from Antioch, the capital of Oriens and possibly outside the walls of Chalcis.

b. Rubin speaks of the "law of the desert" as governing the conduct of Arethas and the Ghassānid phylarchs. In dealing with the tribes of Arabia, there is no doubt that the Ghassānids obeyed the law of the desert. But as a contingent in the army of Oriens, and when dealing with the Persian Lakhmids, the Ghassānids and their commanders did not obey the law of the desert. The Ghassānids were trained to fight in the Roman manner and acquired the discipline of the Roman army after continual service in its campaigns.<sup>10</sup> This was enhanced by their Christianity, which distinguished them from their pagan congeners in Arabia and even from the Lakhmids. Perhaps nothing illustrates this better than what Mundir the Lakhmid did with the captured son of Arethas, whom he sacrificed to the Arabian Aphrodite, and what Arethas did with another of his sons, whom he buried in a *martyrion* in Chalcidicē.

c. The *magisterium militum Orientis* did not look listlessly at Arethas and his Ghassānids. The Ghassānid contingent was probably one of the most seasoned of all troops at the disposal of the *magister militum* in Oriens, especially in a period when the decay of the Roman army was becoming noticeable. This becomes even clearer in the course of the next Ghassānid reign, in the 570s under Mundir, when it scores outstanding victories over the Persian Arabs in three lightning campaigns. Rubin, a specialist on Procopius and the reign of Justinian, is apparently unaware of the Ghassānids in the 570s. His further related statement on the attitude of the infantry toward the cavalry, which the Ghassānids were, is also unjustified. This is a century that witnessed the rising importance of cavalry in warfare, including warfare in Oriens. The battle of Daras, in which Belisarius won his spurs, was entirely a cavalry engagement. Those who were responsible for the conduct of the war in the East, Justinian and Belisarius, the former who appointed Arethas and the Ghassānids, and the latter, who employed them in the wars, knew the worth of the Ghassānid horse and how indispensable it was for the war against the Persians. It is only Procopius who has misled his contemporaries, and since then modern historians, as to the military worth of the Ghassānid *foederati*.

In spite of his views on these *foederati*, Rubin deserves credit for the attention he gave to the role of the federates in the wars of Justinian and to the Lakhmid-

<sup>9</sup> On this, see above, 248.

<sup>10</sup> On Jabala and his fighting in the Roman manner, see above, 65.

Ghassānid war. But he remains the victim of Procopius' view of the Arabs and the Ghassānids, and this has colored his conclusions.<sup>11</sup> He exonerates Procopius in a footnote, just as Procopius exonerates Arethas in much the same way.<sup>12</sup>

## E

### The Last Years of the Reign (561–565)

The last four years of the reign of Justinian was a period of peace on all fronts. The *reconquista* of the Roman Occident had been completed. Narses had won the decisive battle of Busta Gallorum against the Ostrogoths in 552 and, after two more victories, Mons Lactarius and Capua, spent a decade or so in the reorganization and ordered administration of Italy. In the East, the Ghassānids had also won the decisive victory of Chalcis in 554 and in so doing had neutralized the Lakhmids as a threat to Oriens, while a truce with the Persians had obtained since 557, although it was not until the end of 561 that it was converted into a peace.

The Peace of 561 was a major achievement of Justinian's diplomacy, and its most important provision for Byzantium was the Persian surrender of Lazica. It was a comprehensive peace that touched all aspects of Persian-Byzantine relations, and its contemplated duration was fifty years. It was the peace that set the tone for what remained of the reign of Justinian as far as relations with Persia were concerned. The Arabs figure prominently in the clauses of the peace treaty. Two clauses expressly refer to them, and there are implied references in other clauses.

The peace thus is the background for understanding the role of the Arabs in this period, both Ghassānids and Lakhmids, especially the former. The Ghassānid king read the imperial mood correctly and abided faithfully by the provisions of the treaty even in the face of Lakhmid provocation. This is amply clear from the short account of his visit to Constantinople two years after the conclusion of the peace treaty.

#### I. THE PEACE OF 561

The Peace of 561 concluded the Persian wars of Justinian's reign. The text of the treaty has survived in Menander Protector and so have the accounts of the negotiations that preceded and followed it. The treaty has attracted the attention of students of international law. One of them described it as follows: "The two great partners, in concluding the treaties of 561/562, not only

<sup>11</sup> As some thirty years ago the present writer, too, was a victim of Procopius' presentation of the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war as a private war, unrelated to the Persian-Byzantine conflict; see "Procopius and Arethas," 372–73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 373 note 1.

produced a masterpiece of diplomacy but a limited code of rules of international law."<sup>1</sup> An analysis of the treaty and the negotiations substantiate this claim.<sup>2</sup>

Menander's text<sup>3</sup> is detailed and replete with items that throw much light on Arab-Byzantine relations and, what is more, on important aspects of Arab history in the Peninsula in the sixth century. Two of the clauses of the treaty are expressly devoted to the Arabs and two others may relate to them indirectly, all of which suggests the rising importance of the Arabs, both Ghassānids and Lakhmids, in the calculations of the two empires.<sup>4</sup>

### The Clauses of the Treaty

The two clauses of the treaty that directly deal with the Arabs are the second, a military clause, and the fifth, a commercial clause.

1. *The military clause*: "The Saracen allies of both states shall themselves also abide by these agreements and those of the Persians shall not attack the Romans, nor those of the Romans the Persians."<sup>5</sup>

This seemingly simple and straightforward statement has been variously interpreted by those who wrote on the Peace of 561. But a correct interpretation of this clause is important since it raises an important point in the international relations of the period and also in the history of the relations of these two client-kingdoms to their overlords, the Persians and the Romans.

K. Güterbock,<sup>6</sup> after stating what the clause expressed, made it carry the implication that the two Arab client-kingdoms were called upon to desist from hostile action not only against the two empires but also against each

<sup>1</sup> See S. Verosta, "International Law in Europe and Western Asia between 100 and 650 A.D.," *Recueil des cours* (Académie de droit international, 1964), III, tome 113 (Leiden, 1966), 598. For Byzantine treaties in general, see D. A. Miller, "Byzantine Treaties and Treaty-Making: 500-1025 A.D.," *Byzantinoslavica* 32 (1971), 56-76.

<sup>2</sup> Verosta, "International Law," 597-611.

<sup>3</sup> This has been recently edited, translated, and commented upon by R. C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985). All references to Menander in this chapter are to this edition.

<sup>4</sup> The treaty, as it applies to the Arabs, was analyzed in detail by the present writer in 1956. Since then it has been noted in works by B. Rubin, S. Verosta, and R. C. Blockley. For Rubin on the treaty, see *Zeitalter Justinians*, 368-70 and note 1218, which has some useful bibliographical items. The article that appeared in 1956 was limited to the discussion of the two clauses of the treaty, while the present chapter is much wider in scope. For this article see "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561," *Arabica* 3 (1956), 181-213; see esp. 192 note 1.

<sup>5</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 71; Greek original on p. 70: δεύτερον, ὡς ἂν οἱ σύμμαχοι Σαρακηνοὶ ἑκατέρας πολιτείας ἐμμένοιεν καὶ οἱ τοῖς βεβαιωθεῖσαι, καὶ μήτε τοὺς Περωσῶν κατὰ Ῥωμαίων μήτε τοὺς Ῥωμαίων ὀπλίξεσθαι κατὰ Περωσῶν.

<sup>6</sup> K. Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien* (Berlin, 1906), 68-69: "Nr. 2 bestimmte, dass die Friedensbedingungen auch auf die verbündeten Araber Anwendung finden sollten und sie sich daher jedes friedensstörenden Übergriffs gegeneinander, wie gegen die andere Obermacht zu enthalten hätten."



other. J. B. Bury, whose account of the war and the peace that concluded it is most detailed, is distressingly brief on the military clause. He seems to have sensed the difficulty of drawing any conclusions on what the Arabs might or might not do against each other, and solved the problem by shelving it. He gave a noncommittal summary of the clause and dispatched it by stating that "The Saracen allies of both states were included in this Peace."<sup>7</sup> E. Stein<sup>8</sup> understood the clause to carry an implication different from the one Güterbock gave it. He made the clause yield the conclusion that while the Arabs were told to refrain from attacking Persia and Rome, they were left free to fight against each other, if they so wished.

In view of the two conflicting conclusions on the implication of the clause, and the fact that the implication bears on the problem of the relation of the Arabs toward the two empires of which they were clients, a definitive solution of this problem is highly desirable. It is proposed here that Stein was wrong in his interpretation of the clause, an interpretation that makes pointless the unusually specific mention of the Arabs in the peace treaty and confers on the Arabs rights and liberties which the two empires wanted to curtail; that the valid implication is that the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids were given to understand that they might not attack each other, even if they were inclined to do so, while the peace was in force. This interpretation of the military clause can be supported by both internal and external evidence. The external evidence is decisive and consists of three major pieces: the *Strata* dispute of 539; the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war of many years that followed the Peace of 546 and preceded that of 561; and the sequel to the Peace of 561. All these have been examined in detail, and this examination has yielded the conclusion that Güterbock was right in his interpretation of the military clause.<sup>9</sup>

2. *The commercial clause*: "It is agreed that Saracen and all other barbarian merchants of either state shall not travel by strange roads but shall go by Nisibis and Daras, and shall not cross into foreign territory without official permission. But if they dare anything contrary to the agreement (that is to say, if they engage in tax-dodging, so-called), they shall be hunted down by the officers of the frontier and handed over for punishment together with the merchandise which they are carrying, whether Assyrian or Roman."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 121.

<sup>8</sup> Stein, *HBE*, II, 519: "pour ce qui est des états tampons arabes, le traité leur interdisait d'attaquer aussi bien les Romains que les Perses, tout en leur laissant la liberté de se faire la guerre entre eux"; also, earlier in his *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 1919), 41.

<sup>9</sup> For this detailed examination, see "The Arabs in the Peace Treaty of A.D. 561," 199–211. Hence there is no need to repeat it in this chapter. See also Blockley's comment on this clause, *Menander*, 256 note 50.

<sup>10</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 73; Greek original on pp. 70 and 72: διετυπώθη ὡστε τοὺς Σαρα-

Generally speaking the clause is consonant with the third clause in the same treaty, which deals with the Roman and the Persian merchants in that both clauses exhibit the concern of the two empires for the efficient working of their customs houses as a source of revenue for the treasury. Both were badly in need of money, and this is reflected in the sources. The Persians, throughout the century, continually ask for subsidies from the Byzantines. During the course of the second Persian war (540–545), Chosroes behaves like a high-class brigand, extracting money from the emperor and the cities he besieges. Indeed, one of the main conditions of the treaty under discussion was the payment by Byzantium of a huge sum of money to Persia, in return for the cession of Lazica. The Byzantines, on the other hand, were equally interested in building up their economy to meet the heavy outlays of Justinian's wars and buildings, and certain features of Justinian's economic policy reflect his desire to increase his revenue, for example, the exorbitant duties on merchandise and the establishment of state monopolies such as the silk-manufacturing industry. The drain of gold to the East, whether in buying oriental luxuries or the Persian peace, was a fact on which the strictures of Procopius and the financial policies of the reign of Justin II are eloquent commentaries.

Against this picture of the economic policies of the two empires, the smuggling activities of the Arab traders and the attitude of Persia and Byzantium to these activities will be clear. In the case of the Persians, they themselves happened to be middlemen of certain commodities to the Byzantines. Arab intermediary commercial activities, even when they were legal, were a rivalry of some sort to those of the Persians; hence Persian concern over the illegal traffic that the Arab traders were engaged in. It will be remembered that Persia was ruled at this time by the Sasanids, a dynasty that had shown active interest in the development of Persian trade.<sup>11</sup> Apart from what they did in the way of securing a monopoly for the purchase of silk from India, their dealings with the Arabs indicate that they were fully aware that in the Arabs they had strong rivals in the transit trade. In the first place, the Arabs of the Persian Gulf and 'Umān were conveniently situated facing India and Ceylon. Their native seafaring ability fitted them admirably for the naval transit trade. Furthermore, in this period the Arabs were not yet an imperial race, saddled with the administrative duties of governing an empire as the Persians were. They were living as small trading communities, concentrating

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κηνοὺς καὶ τοὺς ὁποιοῦσιν βαρβάρους ἐμπόρους ἐκατέρως πολιτείας μὴ διὰ ξένων ἀτραπῶν ποιῆσθαι τὰς πορείας, μᾶλλον μὲν οὖν διὰ τῆς Νισίβευς καὶ τοῦ Δάρας, μήτε μὴν ἄνευ κελύσεως ἀρχικῆς ἵέναι κατὰ τὴν ἄλλοδαπὴν. εἰ μὲντοι παρὰ τὸ δοκοῦν τοιμῆσωσί τι, ἤγουν, τὸ λεγόμενον, κλεπτοτελωνήσουσιν, ἀνιχνευομένους ὑπο τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις ἀρχόντων ξὺν τοῖς ὅσα ἐπιφέρονται, εἴτε Ἀσύρια φορτία εἶεν εἴτε Ῥωμαῖα, παραδίδοσθαι εὐθύνας ὑφέξοντας.

<sup>11</sup> G. F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Medieval Times* (Princeton, 1951), 38.

all their energies on their function as middlemen. In addition to this, other Arabs were living as nomads and as sedentary communities all along the Mesopotamian land route, and their caravans took care of the transit trade over that route. In short, the Arabs constituted a real threat to the prosperity of whatever transit trade the Persians were handling. Once this is realized, certain chapters in the military history of Persia may become more intelligible. Shāpūr's campaign against the Arabs, which carried him far into Yathrib,<sup>12</sup> is hardly explicable without reference to the economic interest that could be served from the assertion of Persian authority in this vast transit area, especially as we know something about that monarch's interest in the promotion of Persian trade.<sup>13</sup> A similar construction may be put on Kawad's extension of the jurisdiction of Mundir III around 531 to include Bahrayn, 'Umān, and Yamāma. This enabled the Persian monarch to control through his vassal the territory of the people who were engaged in the transit trade, whether those who were engaged in the naval trade of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf or those engaged in the trade over the trans-Arabian land route.

The Byzantines, too, could hardly have been less interested than the Persians in imposing the system of import and export controls on the Arab traders. In the period of the early Roman Empire transit trade was carried by the Roman merchants themselves after Rome's successful intervention in the trade of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. But about the end of the third century the transit trade slipped into the hands of foreign intermediaries—Persians, Abyssinians, Ḥimyarites, and Arabs. This was clearly a great financial loss to the empire, particularly grievous to an empire whose trade with the East was mainly a trade in imports. In view of this and the attempts of Justinian to recuperate economically, and the policy of retrenchment followed by his successor, the attitude of the Byzantines to the Arabs engaged in smuggling, and thus depriving the empire of a source of revenue, is understandable. If the Romans were not producing but only consuming, and if the trade was carried by foreigners, these intermediaries were expected to pay at least some duties on their wares when they reached the frontier, the only profit the empire was capable of making under the circumstances. Byzantine diplomatic activities throw some light on this matter. The whole point in sending Julian to the Abyssinians lay in Justinian's reluctance to pay for the *metaxa* more than he needed to.<sup>14</sup> There it was the Persians who were involved, yet the

<sup>12</sup> See *BAFOC*, 34 note 12, 41 note 44.

<sup>13</sup> Hourani, *Seafaring*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Officially the motive behind the embassy was Justinian's desire that Christian gold should not go to the fire-worshiper. This may have been true, considering that the emperor also happened to be a theologian, but it is also clear that an economic interest could be served by purchasing silk from the Abyssinians more cheaply than the Persians were selling it for or by annoyingly acting as middlemen.

principle guiding Justinian's policy—finding ways of keeping the treasury prosperous by economical purchases—is applicable to his dealing with the Arab traders; the empire was interested in getting as much as it could from this trade, which it needed but which it neither produced nor mediated. Byzantine relations with the Arab phylarchs concerning the island of Iotabe reflect the same concern, since the island was an important trading station at the end of the naval route from the East, and where customs houses were set up by the Romans.

It remains now to investigate the reaction of the Arab traders to these restrictions. The Arab traders were even more sensitive than the Persians and the Byzantines to the newly enforced restrictions. The hardship that these restrictions inflicted on them was caused by the Arabs being neither producers nor consumers. Consequently they made no money from selling their produce, but were entirely dependent on whatever profit they could make from the process of mediation. Indeed, the expensive merchandise they used to buy in Ceylon would have already been made more expensive by the fact that the people of that island (which was the *entrepôt* between the Far and Near East) would have sold it to the Arabs for a price higher than the one they had paid when they bought it from the Chinese merchants. It follows from this that the imposition of these customs duties was a measure that acted most unfavorably toward the Arab traders, for whom the profit they could make from acting as intermediaries was the only source of income in these transactions, and whose obvious course now was to follow the line of least resistance. This they did and by so doing contributed their share to the diversion of trade to the west Arabian route.<sup>15</sup>

Financial considerations were not the only motive behind the restrictions on the Arab traders. A political purpose was also served by these restrictions, which obviated the perils of espionage conducted under the guise of trade. This motive may be inferred by analogy with a similar arrangement between the two empires in the fifth century where the motive is clearly stated. An imperial edict of the year 408/9, which designated Nisibis and Artaxata on the Persian side and Callinicum on the Roman side as the only places where traders should bring their wares, also included the motive of the restriction of commerce to these three places—fear of espionage.<sup>16</sup> The peace treaty of 561 itself contains a clause that supports this interpretation. The sixth clause stipulates that the movement or migration of individuals from Persian territory to Roman territory and vice versa was not to be permitted. Now the Arabs, during the course of the Persian wars of Justinian's reign, were actually employed as spies by both parties. This was understandable: Arabs were native to

<sup>15</sup> And the prosperity of Mecca; on this see *BASIC II*.

<sup>16</sup> *Codex Justinianus*, IV, 63, 4: "Nec alieni regni, quod non convenit, scrutentur arcana."

the area and knew its topography. Furthermore, there were Arabs living on both sides of the Persian-Roman frontier, and so the appearance of Arabs on this or that side of the frontier would not have aroused suspicion. During the actual campaigns, the Arabs were used for spying, since the Roman *magister militum* considered that his seasoned legionaries could give a good account of themselves in a pitched battle, while the fleet Arab *auxilia* would be more serviceable in spying on the enemy in addition to their military function as *auxilia* in the course of battles. The pages of Procopius contain enough evidence for the role the Arabs played in espionage. Before Kawad opened the campaign of Callinicum in 531 at the suggestion of Mundir, Arab spies had already gathered the necessary information for Mundir.<sup>17</sup> During the siege of Sergiopolis, it was ʿAmr, an Arab in the service of Mundir, who saved the city from Chosroes in 542.<sup>18</sup> Again, during the Assyrian campaign of 541 Belisarius outlines his views on what the Arab contingent could do, namely, that it should proceed to Assyria, plunder, reconnoiter, and then report, thus enabling the Romans to know "how matters stand with the Assyrians."<sup>19</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus' vivid descriptions of the Arabs will, in this connection, be seen to have been not only decorative but also functional.<sup>20</sup>

3. The sixth and seventh clauses of the treaty do not specifically refer to the Arabs, and commentators on these two clauses do not include any reference to them. Yet it is possible to relate them to the Arabs indirectly. The sixth clause reads as follows: "If anyone during the period of hostilities defected either from the Romans to the Persians or from the Persians to the Romans and if he should give himself up and wish to return to his home, he shall not be prevented from so doing and no obstacle shall be put in his way. But those who in time of peace defect and desert from one side to the other shall not be received, but every means shall be used to return them, even against their will, to those from whom they fled."<sup>21</sup>

There was much defection of Arabs from Persian territories to Byzantium in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, so much so that there was reference to it in the treaty that concluded the first Persian war of the reign

<sup>17</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.35.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xx.10–14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, II.xix.14.

<sup>20</sup> "Vita est illis semper in fuga" (*Res Gestae*, XIV.iv.1–4); "ad furta magis expeditionum rerum, quam ad concursatorias habilis pugnas" (*ibid.*, XXXI.xvi.5–6). On this commercial clause see also Verosta, "International Law," 605–7, and Blockley, *Menander*, 256 note 56.

<sup>21</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 73; Greek original on p. 72: ὡς εἴ τινας, ἐν ᾧ χρόνῳ ὁ πόλεμος ξυνεστήκει, ἠτομόλησαν, τοῦτο μὲν ὡς Πέρσας ἀπὸ Ῥωμαίων, τοῦτο δὲ <ἀπὸ> Περσῶν ὡς Ῥωμαίους, εἴ γε βούλοιντο οἱ προσκεχωρηκότες ἐς τὰ οἴκοι ἐπαναστρέφειν, μὴ γίνεσθαι σφίσι ἐμποδῶν μήτε μὴν κωλύμῃ χρῆσασθαι τι. τοὺς μέντοι ἐν καιρῷ εἰρήνης αὐτομόλους ἦγον καταφεύγοντας ἐξ ἑτέρων εἰς ἑτέρους μὴ ὑποδέχεσθαι, ἀλλ' ἐκ παντὸς τρόπου καὶ ἄκοντας ἐγχειρίζεσθαι τοῖς ἐξ ὧν καὶ ἀπέδρασαν.

of Theodosius the Younger.<sup>22</sup> So it is not impossible that the Arabs were also implied in this clause, although who these were is not recorded in the sources.<sup>23</sup>

The seventh clause of the treaty reads as follows: "Those who complain that they have suffered some hurt at the hands of subjects of the other state shall settle the dispute equitably, meeting at the border either in person or through their own representatives before the officials of both states, and in this manner the guilty party shall make good the damage."<sup>24</sup>

Since the Arabs lived on both sides of the Perso-Byzantine frontier, they did engage in these activities, and such incidents as the clause refers to are recorded in the sources involving the Arabs, such as the one for 485, in which there is reference to arbitration and the composition of differences by the authorities on both sides.<sup>25</sup> The *Strata* dispute is, however, the most relevant and closest to the treaty of 561, since it involved complaints on the part of the Lakhmid Mundir and was referred to the two arbitrators Summus and Strategius.<sup>26</sup>

#### The Lakhmids

In addition to being referred to under the term "Saracens" in the second clause of the treaty, the Lakhmids receive special mention in the accounts of the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the treaty, conducted by Peter and the Zikh (Yazdgushnasp), and those that followed it, between Peter and Chosroes himself. These negotiations involving the Lakhmids turn round the controversial question of the subsidies that Justinian used to extend to Mundir, a most curious transaction, as he was giving subsidies to the ally of Persia, the inveterate enemy of his ally, the Ghassānid Arethas. In view of the importance of these accounts in Menander, they merit a detailed examination.<sup>27</sup>

#### A

The account of the negotiations that preceded the conclusion of the treaty reads as follows.

<sup>22</sup> Imru' al-Qays defected in the 4th century (see *BAFIC*, 59–113), as did others in the 5th, such as Aspebetos, the bishop and phylarch of the Palestinian Parembole. For the treaty that mentions Saracen defectors, see *BAFIC*, 36–37.

<sup>23</sup> In the 6th century a Persian Arab by the name of 'Adīd ('Azīz?) came over to Byzantium with his troops in 503; see *The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite*, 61.

<sup>24</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 73; Greek original on p. 72: ὥστε τοὺς ἐπεγαλοῦντας περὶ τοῦ σίνεσθαι τι σφᾶς τοὺς ἀντιπολιτευομένους δίκη τέμνεσθαι τὸ φιλονεικούμενον ἢ δι' ἑαυτῶν τῶν τὴν βλάβην πεπονθόντων ἢ δι' οἰκείων ἀνθρώπων ἐν τοῖς μεθορίοις παρὰ τοῖς ἀρχουσιν ἐκατέρας πολιτείας ξυνιόντων, οὕτω τε τὸν ζημιώσαντα ἀκέσασθαι τὸ σάξον.

<sup>25</sup> For this see *BAFOC*, 115–19. For another incident involving Arabs on both sides of the frontier, but which ended in violence, see Joshua the Stylite, *Chronicle*, 69–70.

<sup>26</sup> See above, 209–16.

<sup>27</sup> On scholars who commented on these two clauses, the sixth and the seventh, but without reference to the Arabs, see Blockley, *Menander*, 257 notes 55, 56.



Then the Zikh raised the subject of Alamundar's son, Ambrus, the chief of the Saracens, saying that he, like the previous chief of the Saracens, ought to receive the hundred pounds of gold. Peter replied, "Our master honoured Ambrus' predecessor with a free gift of gold, given in whatever amount and at whatever time the Emperor saw fit. Thus, a messenger was dispatched by the public post to deliver to the Saracen whatever the Roman Emperor sent to him. In the same way the Saracen for his part sent an envoy bearing gifts to our Emperor, and again our ruler bestowed gifts in his turn. Therefore, if Ambrus is willing to do the same, he shall receive gifts, should the Emperor wish it. If Ambrus is unwilling, he is very foolishly raising a problem to no purpose. For he will receive nothing at all."<sup>28</sup>

The Zikh's short statement is very informative on the subsidies and on the Persian point of view about it. It calls for the following comments. (1) The Persian concern over the subsidies for their Lakhmid allies reflects their desire to keep these allies happy by speaking on their behalf and trying to secure for them a substantial income from Byzantium, possibly also to lighten their own burden in subsidizing their own allies, the Lakhmids. (2) The request of the Zikh is also informative on the amount that the Lakhmids used to receive from Justinian: a hundred pounds of gold—a *centenarium*. (3) It clearly implies that these subsidies had stopped in the years preceding the negotiations, but exactly when is not clear. (4) The request also gives a new dimension to the raids that Mundir, the Lakhmid, used to make against Oriens and the motive behind them. He used to plunder, but he also found that he could receive regular subsidies from Justinian for *not* raiding Oriens. (5) Finally, it is interesting that the Zikh was trying to make this receipt of subsidies a hereditary principle, which the Lakhmid son would inherit from his father, his predecessor, thus following the pattern of the Persian kings themselves in this matter.

The task of the Byzantine negotiator, Peter, was to rid his emperor of this embarrassing revelation that the Zikh had made known. (1) He emphasizes that these subsidies were not the result of a formal agreement with the emperor at all. They were free gifts, not paid regularly, and were not a fixed amount. His reply sounds evasive, compared to the request of the Zikh, which suggests that Justinian did actually pay Mundir a fixed amount of one hundred pounds, although not regularly. (2) Interesting is the statement that these subsidies were carried by the public post; that Mundir reciprocated by sending "an envoy bearing gifts to our Emperor."<sup>29</sup> These could only have

<sup>28</sup> See *ibid.*, 69, 71; Greek original on pp. 68, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Christians who knew Greek acted as intermediaries between the Persians and the Byzan-

been symbolic and must have consisted of some luxury articles such as abounded in Persia, perhaps silk *metaxa* from China or frankincense from southern Arabia. (3) To clinch his point that the subsidies were informal and intermittent he challenges Mundir's son, 'Amr, to act as his father had done, and ends his speech with a threat. This hard line taken by Peter must have for its background the resounding victory of Arethas over Mundir in 554 which left Mundir dead on Roman territory in Chalcis. This left the Byzantines in a good bargaining position and the Persians in a bad one, hence the fact that nothing was conceded to the Zikh, and the Lakhmids received no subsidies in the clauses of the peace treaty of 561.

### B

After the conclusion of the Peace of 561, Peter travels to Persia and meets with Chosroes early in 562 to discuss the question of Suania, and again the question of subsidies to the Lakhmids comes up, this time in the palace of Chosroes in Ctesiphon. The account, as it has survived in Menander, consists of a complaint by Chosroes on the failure of the Lakhmids to get subsidies from Byzantium and Peter's reply to Chosroes.

When the Persian king had voiced these opinions, he temporarily dropped the subject of Suania, and they began to discuss, in a kind of digression, Ambrus, the son of Alamundar the Saracen. The King spoke first: "Our subject Ambrus the Saracen is extremely critical of the Zikh and has laid a most serious complaint against the man, that when we made a treaty with you the Zikh obtained no advantage for him." Peter replied, "Never at any time did the Saracens subject to you receive from the Romans a fixed amount of gold, either as a result of compulsion or by agreement. Rather, Alamundar, the father of Ambrus, sent gifts to the Roman Emperor, and when the latter received them he sent gifts in return. This was not done every year, and once there was an interval of five years. But, at any rate, this practice was maintained by Alamundar and ourselves for a very long time. And the Almighty knows that Alamundar did this out of no great goodwill towards the Persians. For it was agreed that if you made war upon us, Alamundar's sword would remain sheathed and unused against the Roman state. This remained the situation for some time. But now your brother and my master has adopted a policy that I consider, O King, to be very sensible and he says, 'If the states are steadfast in keeping the peace, what future benefit will I derive from calling upon the subjects and slaves of the Persian king to

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tines; on the Arab from Hira, 'Adī ibn-Zayd, who went on an embassy to Constantinople, see below, 478-82.

ignore the interests of their masters and from exchanging gifts with them?" The king said, "If envoys were exchanged and the parties honoured each other with gifts before the peace, I think that these earlier arrangements should be maintained."

These were the arguments advanced concerning Ambrus. They then returned to the dispute over Suania.<sup>30</sup>

The Persian concern over the Lakhmid subsidies is reflected in the fact that the king himself, Chosroes, takes it up with Peter, the *magister officiorum*. This sounds like a genuine complaint, and the implication is that the Lakhmids were truly angry that the Persian negotiator had not prevailed on his Byzantine counterpart to agree to the continuation of the subsidies. In order not to have Lakhmid-Persian relations ruffled, the king of kings himself intervenes. That the Lakhmid 'Amr was truly angry is reflected in the fact that he attacked Arethas' territory shortly after, an act of aggression about which Arethas complained in 563 when he was in Constantinople.<sup>31</sup>

Peter's reply repeats and confirms what he had said to the Zikh in 561 before the conclusion of the treaty—denying that the subsidies were a formal agreement or a fixed amount—but he brings in some new thoughts. He pretends that it was not Justinian but Mundir who started the exchange of gifts, contrary to what he has said before to the Zikh. While he denies that it was done every year, he concedes that it was maintained "for a very long time." Finally, he says that there was a period of five years during which no subsidy was paid to Mundir. The number "five" brings to mind the five-year truces that were concluded in the period between the end of the second Persian war and the Peace of 561: the truce of 545, concluded for five years; the truce of 551, also for five years; and the truce of 557, with no time limit but which lasted roughly five years. During the first *quinquennium* Justinian paid the Persians 2,000 pounds of gold; during the second he paid 2,600 pounds; during the third he paid nothing. So it is conceivable that Justinian stopped paying the Lakhmids during one of these three five-year periods, and that this period is the one Peter had in mind when he said that the subsidies were stopped for five years.

It is also noteworthy that in his reply the Byzantine diplomat tried to undermine the reputation of Mundir for loyalty toward the Persians by suggesting that, in case of hostilities between the two great powers, "Alamundar's sword would remain sheathed and unused against the Roman state." This is a curious confession by the Byzantine diplomat and suggests that there was indeed an agreement between the two Lakhmid kings and the Romans,

<sup>30</sup> See Blockley, *Menander*, 83, 85; Greek original on pp. 82, 84; see also 259 note 77.

<sup>31</sup> On this, see below, 282–88.

contrary to what he had maintained earlier. However, it is difficult to imagine, if this statement is true, that Mundir would have agreed to remain inactive in case of a war between Persia and Byzantium, since his federate status inextricably linked him to Persia. All that he could have promised was not to invade Roman territory on his own initiative, and if he gave some such assurance to Justinian about remaining inactive, he could only have been bluffing. Chosroes' reply to Peter suggests that Peter won the argument and the matter was dropped. The victory of Arethas over Mundir in 554 had set the tone for all these exchanges and made concessions on the part of Byzantium superfluous.

## C

The truth about this curious relationship between Justinian and Mundir, which translated into the payment of subsidies, cannot be exactly ascertained<sup>32</sup> from the arguments and counterarguments in Menander, but it is certain that Justinian did pay Mundir a subsidy on many occasions, most probably one *centenarium* of gold. This conclusion may be supported by the following observations.<sup>33</sup>

1. It must all have started during the Ramla conference<sup>34</sup> in the early 520s, when Justinian did in fact pay a large sum of money for the ransom of the two Byzantine dukes whom Mundir had captured in one of his raids. The conference was the true starting point of this curious relationship and the foundation on which it was built.

2. Equally important is the fact that the conference advertised the prestige of Mundir as a factor of weight in the wars and politics of the Near East. He appeared as an independent king receiving embassies from various quarters that were courting his favor. It is, therefore, natural to suppose that Justinian was impressed. This explains what seems at first sight inexplicable—that the emperor of the Romans would send subsidies to Mundir the Lakhmid, who was the ally of his age-old enemy the Persian king, and who was also the inveterate enemy of his own ally, the Ghassānid Arethas.

3. Justinian's main concern in his war was not the East but the recovery of the West. Hence he was prepared literally to buy the peace in the East in order to win the war in the West. He bought the Persian king for that purpose, and it was part of this diplomacy that he also buy the king's vassal, who posed a threat to Oriens and the Holy Land and could also bring about the outbreak of general hostilities in the East with Persia.

<sup>32</sup> See Blockley, *Menander*, 255 note 46. See Rothstein, *DLH*, 96–98.

<sup>33</sup> These have not been made by those who have discussed this issue, but they are important in order to make this curious relationship intelligible.

<sup>34</sup> On this conference, see above, 40–42.

4. This is actually what happened during the *Strata* dispute,<sup>35</sup> when the second Persian war, at least ostensibly, broke out in the aftermath of that dispute between the Ghassānid and the Lakhmid client-kings. The accusations made by Chosroes during the dispute that Justinian tried to bribe Mundir were probably correct. Justinian was a pragmatist in dealing with the Arabs. As he was anxious that his war in the West not be affected by the outbreak of another war in the East, with the consequence of his having to fight on two fronts, it is perfectly possible that he tried to bribe Mundir with subsidies if this could avert a war, especially since he believed in the power of the Byzantine *solidus*.

5. As for his relationship with Arethas the Ghassānid, whom he set up as a counterpoise to Mundir, it might have been slightly embarrassing but did not discourage the willful emperor from doing what he thought best—resort to *solidus* diplomacy even with Mundir. Relations with Arethas, although good, could be ruffled<sup>36</sup> because of the course of Monophysite-Dyophysite relations and the failure of the emperor to reconcile the adherents of the two theological positions. Besides, Justinian did not have to inform his Ghassānid ally that he was sending subsidies to Mundir; his postal service, which carried the subsidy, could easily have passed through Persian territory unnoticed by the Ghassānids.

#### Miscellaneous Observations

It remains to discuss the twelfth clause of the treaty: the status of the Christians in Persia (a matter that was raised after the treaty was ratified) and the translation of the text of the treaty into Greek and Persian. The last two items bear indirectly on the Arabs and Arab-Byzantine relations.

1. The twelfth clause of the treaty reads as follows: "Here you might find prayers to God and imprecations to the effect that may God be gracious and ever an ally to him who abides by the peace, but if anyone with deceit wishes to alter any of the agreements, may God be his adversary and enemy."<sup>37</sup> At first sight it seems startling that the most Christian and Orthodox emperor, Justinian, should not invoke the figure of Jesus Christ or the Holy Trinity in a document of this kind. But the omission is understandable diplomatically as it would have offended the religious susceptibilities of the Persians; hence recourse was had to a formula that would satisfy both the Christian Byzantines and the Zoroastrian Persians who were fire-worshippers. The First Person of the Trinity was acceptable to both. This brings to mind what Constantius had done in the fourth century, when he wrote not to a pagan ruler but to the two

<sup>35</sup> On this dispute, see above, 209–16.

<sup>36</sup> As in fact they were, not infrequently, throughout the century.

<sup>37</sup> See Blockley, *Menander*, 75; Greek original on p. 74.

*tyrannoi* of Ethiopia, who were Christian.<sup>38</sup> In his letter, the Arian emperor suppressed all reference to Christ and referred only to God, exactly as Justinian was to do in the peace treaty of 561.

2. On the status of Christians in Persia, the text of Menander reads as follows: "When these matters had been agreed and ratified, they turned to a separate consideration of the status of the Christians in Persia. It was agreed that they could build churches and worship freely and without hindrance sing their hymns of praise, as is our custom."<sup>39</sup> This understanding between the two powers sounds like a great concession on the part of Chosroes, but in reality it was not. There were few Zoroastrians in Byzantium, while the Manichaeans were considered heretics by the strict Zoroastrian clergy. Chosroes was concerned about Christian proselytizing in Persia, but this was guarded against by this agreement,<sup>40</sup> and this must have given him much satisfaction.

How did this agreement affect Arab Christianity in Persian territory, especially in Ḥīra, the great Arab urban center and the seat of the Lakhmids? It is possible to see in this agreement the beginning of a new phase in the life of the Lakhmids who did not adopt Christianity partly for fear that their Persian overlord would frown on their conversion. As is well known, the last of them, Nu'mān, adopted it later in the century,<sup>41</sup> and it may well be that the process that finally won over the Lakhmid rulers to Christianity began in 561 with this agreement. It is also possible that the resoundingly Christian tone of the Hind inscription in Ḥīra may be ascribed to it.<sup>42</sup> The Lakhmid king, 'Amr ibn-Hind (554–559), is referred to in the inscription in terms that suggest he was a Christian.

3. Finally, Menander has preserved two precious passages in his account of how the treaty was translated into Greek and Persian. It is a detailed, informative description and deserves to be quoted *in extenso* because of its importance and rarity.

Before the treaty was ratified, Menander has the following to say on the translation process:

When these and other issues had been argued out, the fifty-one year treaty was written out in Persian and Greek, and the Greek copy was

<sup>38</sup> On this see *BAFOC*, 100–101.

<sup>39</sup> See Blockley, *Menander*, 75; Greek original on p. 74. The rest of the text on Menander on the status of Christians is irrelevant to the Arabs and Arab-Byzantine relations.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 76; English translation on p. 77.

<sup>41</sup> On this see Rothstein, *DLH*, 139–43, and *BASIC II* for a newly published Arabic manuscript.

<sup>42</sup> The inscription engraved in the reign of 'Amr, the son of Munḍir, is naturally assigned to the years 554–569. But the period during which it was inscribed may now be narrowed to 561–569, if the treaty of 561 affected or started to affect the religious complexion of the Lakhmid kings of Ḥīra. For the Hind inscription, see *BASIC II*.



translated into Persian and the Persian into Greek. For the Romans the documents were validated by Peter the master of the offices, Eusebius and others, for the Persians by the Zikh Yesdegusnaph, the Surenas and others. When the agreements had been written on both sides, they were placed side-by-side to ensure that the language corresponded.<sup>43</sup>

After the treaty was ratified, Menander gave another description of the translation process and the formalities that attended it.

When matters had progressed to this stage of orderly development, those whose task it was took the texts of the two documents and polished their contents, using language of equivalent force. Then they made facsimiles of both. The originals were rolled up and secured by seals both of wax and of the other substance used by the Persians, and were impressed by the signets of the envoys and of twelve interpreters, six Roman and six Persian. Then the two sides exchanged the treaty documents, the Zikh handing the one in Persian to Peter, and Peter the one in Greek to the Zikh. Then the Zikh was given an unsealed Persian translation of the Greek original to be kept as a reference for him, and Peter likewise was given a Greek translation of the Persian.<sup>44</sup>

These passages reflect the great care that the two empires took in ensuring precision in the translation of the document into the two languages. The number of interpreters is impressive—six Persians and six Romans; it is significant that all twelve of them impressed their signets on the two documents together with the envoys. The Byzantine *magister officiorum* received a copy of the Persian text; so he returned to Constantinople with both the Greek and Persian versions, which he deposited in the archives of his office in Constantinople. It was this document that presumably Menander used when he wrote his *History*.

This precious account of how treaties between the two powers were drawn up and translated throws light on how previous treaties of the reign of Justinian were translated. Yet Procopius, the chief historian of the Persian wars of the reign, does not say much of anything on the process when he describes Persian-Byzantine treaties.

Was there an Arabic version of the treaty or indeed two versions, one for the Ghassānid Arethas and another for the Lakhmid 'Amr? The chances are that there were two such versions, and in support of this the following may be adduced.

1. The two groups of Arabs, the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids, were specifically included and explicitly mentioned in one of the clauses of the

<sup>43</sup> See Blockley, *Menander*, 71; Greek original on p. 70; see also 255 note 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 77; Greek original on p. 76; see also 259 notes 68, 69.

treaty. It was an unusual reference to them; the two powers went out of their way to include them because of misunderstandings that had arisen from their being only implied in previous treaties, an omission that led to continual warfare between the two groups with which the two powers were involved. It is therefore natural to suppose that the two powers informed their allies—the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids—of their inclusion in the treaty, and the natural presumption is that they sent them copies of the treaty in their own language in order to guard against misapprehension of their position. To have sent the text in Greek and in Persian would not have served the purpose.

2. The number of translators mentioned in Menander is impressive: six from each side. It is natural to suppose that Persia and Byzantium had interpreters who could turn Greek and Persian into Arabic and vice versa in view of the important relations they had with the Arabs. In the case of the Persians this is not only an inference, but there are reliable sources on Arab-Persian affairs that refer to such translators and to the existence of the Bureau of Arab Affairs in Ctesiphon, which attended, among other things, to such matters as translating official documents. The name of one of these translators is known, 'Adī ibn-Zayd.<sup>45</sup> The presumption is that there were translators, too, on the Greek side for communicating with the Ghassānid Arabs.<sup>46</sup>

3. An echo of the dispatch of an Arabic version of the treaty to the Ghassānid Arethas at Jābiya, his capital, is reflected in the account of the latter's journey to Constantinople in 563. During that visit he complained to Justinian that 'Amr had attacked his territory. The implication of the complaint is that he did not retaliate, and his non-retaliation may be construed as a reflection of the fact that he received a copy of the treaty, the second clause of which enjoins on him not to engage in any hostile action whether against Persia or its Lakhmid ally 'Amr.<sup>47</sup> The raid of the latter on Ghassānid territory also suggests that the Persians sent 'Amr a copy of the treaty. But 'Amr was differently circumstanced, and this explains his almost immediate violation of the treaty by his raid. Chosroes, who took up his case with Peter about the continuation of the subsidies, clearly informed his client of his failure to secure the continuation. Hence 'Amr's chagrin and his impulsive offensive in spite of the treaty, which must have reached him, whose second clause specifically calls upon him to refrain from military operations against his Ghassānid counterpart. That he violated it is understandable, and Chosroes, who was disappointed because he had failed to secure for 'Amr the continuation of the subsidy, would have gleefully connived at his vassal's recalcitrance.

It is, therefore, safe to conclude that there was an Arabic version of the treaty of 561, executed later than the Persian-Greek versions, possibly in An-

<sup>45</sup> On this see *BAFIC*, 418.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 416–18.

<sup>47</sup> On this see below, 282–83.

tioch or in Constantinople, a copy of which was kept by the *magister officiorum* in Constantinople, while a copy was sent to the Ghassānid capital, Jābiya. Thus the text of this treaty may be added to others, such as the treaty of 502 with the Arabs, echoes of which have survived in the Arabic sources.<sup>48</sup>

## II. ARETHAS IN CONSTANTINOPLE, 563

In November 563, the Ghassānid king/phylarch came to Constantinople in order to discuss with Justinian the question of which of his sons should succeed him after his death, and to complain about what the Lakhmid ʿAmr, the son of Mundir, had done to his territories. In Theophanes the account of the visit reads as follows: τῷ δὲ Νοεμβρίῳ μηνὶ εἰσῆλθεν ἐν Βυζαντίῳ Ἀρεθῆσ, ὁ πατρικιὸς καὶ φύλαρχος τῶν Σαρακηνῶν, ὀφειλᾶς ἀγαγεῖν τῷ βασιλεῖ, τίς τῶν τέκνων αὐτοῦ ὀφείλει μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀποβίωσιν κρατῆσαι τῆς φυλαρχίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ περὶ τῶν γινομένων ὑπὸ Ἀμβρου, τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἀλαμουνδάρου, εἰς τοὺς τόπους αὐτοῦ.<sup>49</sup>

This is a precious notice of the Ghassānid king, brief though it is. Its precision and informativeness<sup>50</sup> suggest that Theophanes, who wrote much later than 563, took it from an archival source or from a source that ultimately derives from one, such as the records of the *magister officiorum* in Constantinople.<sup>51</sup> In the pages of Theophanes, the passage stands isolated and far removed from the last mention of the Ghassānids.<sup>52</sup> But its isolation can be terminated by collation with passages in Menander Protector and the Syriac sources. This makes it possible to extract some historical data from it.

### A

Arethas is described as "*patricius* and *phylarchos* of the Saracens." Although his patriciate is mentioned before 563, this is the only attestation of it when he was physically in Constantinople.<sup>53</sup> Thus he visits the capital having

<sup>48</sup> On this see above, 3–12; on other treaties involving the Arabs in the 4th and the 5th centuries, see *BAFIC*, 416–18.

<sup>49</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, I, 240.

<sup>50</sup> The passage in Theophanes has one textual problem presented by the word ὀφειλᾶς, "debts, dues," which makes no sense in this context and may have crept into the text through confusion with ὀφείλει which occurs close to it in the same passage. The Latin version of Anastasius with its "debita" (p. 148, line 26) is not helpful as it is a faithful reproduction of the ambiguity of the original. Arethas received the *annona foederatica* and could render to Justinian what was the latter's due only in the form of a report to the emperor (who had employed him) on his doings and his plans. So the key to the correct translation of the sentence in which ὀφειλᾶς occurs is by construing the following sentence which begins with τίς . . . as expegetic of it. It should then read: "was obliged to report to the emperor which of his sons . . ." This is indeed the rendering of Roger Scott, the collaborator of Cyril Mango in the translation of the *Chronographia*. I should like to thank Professor Mango for conveying it to me in a personal communication.

<sup>51</sup> The visit is not recorded by Menander; see below, 331–37, on Menander and the Arabs.

<sup>52</sup> On p. 141 of the *Chronographia*.

<sup>53</sup> On his patriciate, see below, 512–18.

attained the highest Byzantine honor. Arethas' victory over the inveterate enemy of Byzantium, the Lakhmid Mundir, on Byzantine territory in Chalcidicē in 554, must have made him a welcome visitor. And it must have put the emperor in a receptive mood to discuss with Arethas his requests and complaints. Noteworthy is his description as "*phylarchos* of the Saracens." In spite of the *Basileia* of 529 and the supreme phylarchate with which he was endowed, for Byzantium, and in the strict terminology of the Byzantine hierarchical system, he remained a phylarch. The conservative Byzantine hierarchical system did not even use such a term as "archiphylarchos," and in the novel on Arabia he appears as "phylarchos," pure and simple.<sup>54</sup> Also his office, in the passage in Theophanes, appears not as βασιλεία but as φυλαρχία. This was absolutely necessary to use since the chronographer reserves the term βασιλεύς for the emperor and it would have been singularly inappropriate to use the same title to describe the Saracen kinglet.

## B

The purpose of the visit is succinctly told and turns round two issues, the first of which was the question of succession to the phylarchate. In spite of the brevity of the statement on succession, much history can be extracted from this statement, as may be seen from the following analysis and the number of questions that can be raised in relation to it.

1. Arethas' desire to settle the question of succession must have arisen since he was getting old, having served for more than thirty years as supreme phylarch. Even more important was the realization that his patron Justinian was also getting old; hence his desire to settle this question while the emperor was still alive. Arethas must have been aware of the possibility of dissension among his sons if he died without solving the problem. Noteworthy is the statement that he wants a successor after his death, since as an old warrior he wanted to die in harness.

2. For that purpose, Arethas found it necessary to make the journey to the capital itself and not only to the capital of Oriens, Antioch, where he could have met the *magister militum*. Clearly he deemed the matter so important, as in fact it was, that a journey to Constantinople was necessary. The delicate mission he was on needed the understanding of the emperor who had made him in 529 supreme phylarch and king and who still cherished the memory of his wife, Theodora, the patroness of Arethas and the Monophysite movement.<sup>55</sup>

3. It was also necessary to discuss the question of succession thoroughly

<sup>54</sup> See above, 196–98.

<sup>55</sup> In 559 after the conclusion of the treaty with Zabergan, Justinian made a triumphal entry into Constantinople, and when the imperial procession passed before the Church of the Apostles, he stopped there to pray and light candles at the tomb of Theodora; see Stein, *HBE*, 540 and 818.

and with none other than Justinian, because the succession, or rather the appointment, was not to an ordinary *phylarchia*. It was the extraordinary one which was created for Arethas in 529 by the emperor himself and which put him in command not only of his Ghassānid phylarchs and troops but also of other non-Ghassānid federate groups,<sup>56</sup> whom, on some occasions, he had difficulty in controlling.<sup>57</sup> Hence his desire to discuss the succession with the emperor himself in Constantinople.

4. The discussion of which of his sons should succeed him clearly implies that Arethas had more than one son. One of them, Jabala, had been killed in 554 in the encounter with Muḍīr. Another, left anonymous by Procopius, had also been killed in the 540s.<sup>58</sup> Even after the death of these two, Arethas had more than one son, as is clearly implied in the use of the plural by Theophanes. Only one of them is known by name, none other than Muḍīr, who actually succeeded him in 569.

Muḍīr was a Monophysite, and this throws more light on why it was necessary for Arethas to come to the capital for settling the question of succession, this time from the point of view of Arethas himself. The Ghassānids, although staunch Monophysites, had among them some Dyophysite princes or phylarchs, as is clear from the Syriac sources.<sup>59</sup> It is therefore possible that among the sons of Arethas there were those who were inclined toward Chalcedon. Arethas wanted a successor who was a Monophysite as well as a competent soldier; and he had also to reckon with the Chalcedonian camp<sup>60</sup> in the capital that would view the Monophysite Arab phylarchs with suspicion and probably would have wanted Chalcedonian ones. Hence the necessity of the journey to Constantinople.

5. Muḍīr was clearly the one who was chosen, and he answered to the description of a doughty warrior and a zealous Monophysite. His choice raises some questions. (a) Did Arethas bring Muḍīr with him to Constantinople? The chances are that he did. Arethas probably wanted to show Justinian his equally redoubtable son, since his physical presence would have impressed the emperor, even as his own impressed the capital.<sup>61</sup> There is a parallel to this. When Muḍīr himself visited Tiberius in Constantinople, he brought his sons

<sup>56</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

<sup>57</sup> On brushes with the phylarchs of Kinda and Salih, see above, 185–88, 119–21.

<sup>58</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.xxviii.13.

<sup>59</sup> On the brothers of Muḍīr who were so suspected, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 27. On the possibly non-Monophysite phylarch whom the Romans installed in the early 580s in Oriens after the fall of the Ghassānid Muḍīr, and who was his brother, see *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>60</sup> This was a real opposition group to the Ghassānids in Constantinople, as is clear from the fall of the Ghassānid Muḍīr in the 580s. They must have resented the appearance of a die-hard Monophysite in the capital as the defender of Christian Oriens against the pagan Persians and Lakhmids, let alone the fact that the emperor himself must have addressed the Saracen chief with the customary salutation "my father."

<sup>61</sup> On the impact that Arethas made on the future emperor, Justin II, during his visit to Constantinople, see below, 287.

with him.<sup>62</sup> (b) It is possible to infer from references to Munḍir in Menander, later in the 560s, that he actually became the crown prince from 563 and was put in charge of the desert march outside the *limes*, so that he might watch the Lakhmids.<sup>63</sup> (c) In so doing the Ghassānid *basileus* was following the Byzantine pattern of co-rulership. Just as his nephew, Justin, became co-ruler with Justinian,<sup>64</sup> so did Munḍir most probably become co-ruler with his father. Perhaps even Justinian may have suggested this himself, and if so, this would have been a new phase in the development of the Ghassānid *Basileia*, the collegial aspect that characterized the Byzantine imperial system. Succession among the Ghassānids was dynastic; now, apparently, it also became collegial with the election of a co-ruler during the last years of the reigning king.

## C

In addition to the question of succession, Arethas discussed the raids of the Lakhmid ʿAmr into his territory. This, too, is a cautious complaint, which raises many questions.

1. The complaint is surprising, coming as it does from the victor of the battle of Chalcis, who had soundly trounced the Lakhmids in 554, killing their king Munḍir. Since then the tide had turned against the Lakhmids in favor of the Ghassānids. But when set against the background of the second clause of the treaty of 561, the complaint becomes immediately intelligible. The second clause stipulated that the Arab allies of Byzantium and Persia were not to engage in military action either against the two powers or between themselves. As has been argued earlier, Arethas' restraint in not retaliating is an excellent guide for the correct interpretation of that clause. That he chose to complain of the raid of ʿAmr rather than take independent action also reflects favorably on the growth of his loyalty and the sense of responsibility he had developed toward Byzantium, demonstrated often enough early in his career, but which the prejudice of the chief historian of the reign of Justinian, Procopius, had obscured.<sup>65</sup>

2. The Lakhmid ʿAmr's hostile action, too, is surprising, coming as it does so shortly after the conclusion of the treaty of 561 with its second clause just discussed. However, two passages in Menander Protector fully explain

<sup>62</sup> Justinian may even have conferred on Munḍir military titles as Tiberius was to do with the sons of Munḍir when he brought them to Constantinople; on this see below, 399.

<sup>63</sup> See below, 313.

<sup>64</sup> Justin was *caesars* from 552 to 565 and was virtually co-ruler with Justinian in the latter's last years; see Flavius Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris*, ed. and trans. Averil Cameron (London, 1976), Book I, 137–42.

<sup>65</sup> Most probably, he also did not want to ruffle his relations with Justinian who certainly would have frowned on retaliation. This must have been the case in view of his imminent journey to Constantinople.



this irrational behavior of the Lakhmid king, and it pertains to the question of the subsidies that ʿAmr claimed in the negotiations that preceded and followed the treaty of 561. His case was presented first by the Zikh and then by Chosroes himself, but to no avail.<sup>66</sup> Hence his chagrin and desire to revenge himself on Ghassānid territory.

3. The military action taken by ʿAmr is not easy to identify in the Arabic sources.<sup>67</sup> It is noteworthy that ʿAmr is careful not to attack *Byzantine* territory lest he should seriously violate the peace treaty of 561, something which would not have been tolerated by the Persians. So he chose to attack the Ghassānid *foederati* and apparently not within the *limes* but somewhere outside it in Ghassānid territory *extra limitem* and in the Arabian Peninsula—the lesser evil as a violation of the treaty.

4. Theophanes is silent on the reaction of Justinian to ʿAmr's violation of the treaty of 561, as he is on the choice of Mundīr. But it is not difficult to infer from the speech of John, son of Domentiolus, in 567 when he visited Chosroes to announce the accession of Justin II, that the emperor sent ʿAmr<sup>68</sup> a subsidy in order to keep him quiet and not engage in more violations that might involve the two powers, perhaps without the knowledge of the Ghassānid phylarch.

5. The reference to τὸς τόπους αὐτοῦ when Arethas was complaining of ʿAmr's violation of his territory, raises the question of whether or not the Ghassānids had a territory of their own, outside the *limes*. The answer must be in the affirmative. (a) This is the clear implication of the phrase in Theophanes and is confirmed by the phrase applied in Menander to the territory of his son Mundīr in 567, τὴν Ἀλαμουνδάρου γῆν.<sup>69</sup> (b) This is in conformity with what is known about the Ghassānids and their early history when they were moving from Ḥijāz into Roman territory. Around 530 one of them, the phylarch Abū Karib, presents to Justinian the palm groves, Phoinikōn, an oasis in Ḥijāz.<sup>70</sup> But where exactly this Ghassānid territory was is not entirely clear. Menander describes it as "on the borders of Arabia," but whether Arabia meant the Peninsula or the Provincia is not evident. It could have included territory in Ḥijāz where the Azd element was strong (the Ghassānids belonged to the tribal group Azd); it could have been in Dūmat al-Jandal or somewhere near the Persian-Byzantine border.<sup>71</sup> (c) Finally, this is confirmed by the fact

<sup>66</sup> See above, 273–75.

<sup>67</sup> See Rothstein, *DLH*, 96, on the possibility that it may have been the one undertaken with the tribe of Bakr against the Ghassānids.

<sup>68</sup> See Stein, *HBE*, II, 521 note 4, and below, 308–9.

<sup>69</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, p. 110, lines 122–23.

<sup>70</sup> See above, 125–29.

<sup>71</sup> That is reasonably near ʿAmr's territory from which the Lakhmid found it easy to attack Ghassānid territory.

that when Mundir left the service of Byzantium in the 570s, he retired for some years to the Peninsula where he and the Ghassānids sulked for years, as most probably did Jabala during the reign of Justin I.<sup>72</sup>

## D

What other achievements Arethas accomplished while in Constantinople, on which Theophanes is silent, can only be inferred from other sources. Arethas was a zealous Monophysite, and that confession was resuscitated around 540 when he secured the appointment of Jacob and Theodore as Monophysite bishops in Oriens. It is, therefore, natural to suppose that he engaged in activities related to that cause. And indeed a letter that has survived in Syriac testifies to his efforts toward the election of Paul to the Monophysite patriarchate of Antioch, which had been vacant.<sup>73</sup> There is reference in that letter to the Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosius, who was then living in Constantinople. Thus it is certain that Arethas used his visit to the capital to establish contact with the Monophysite party in Constantinople, whose head was Theodosius. It is practically certain that he also established contact with the members of the imperial family, such as the future emperor Justin II and his wife, Sophia, whose Monophysite sympathies were well known to John of Ephesus and on which more will be said later.<sup>74</sup>

Thus the Syriac sources complement what Theophanes<sup>75</sup> says on Arethas' visit to Constantinople. The first record his contribution to the Monophysite *ecclesia* and the second to the Chalcedonian *imperium*. Arethas appears in the Syriac sources as a truly devout<sup>76</sup> Christian who has not forgotten his church and works anxiously, even toward the end of his life, for the consecration of Paul as the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, as twenty years earlier he had worked for the consecration of Jacob Baradaeus.

## E

Finally, the passage on Arethas in John of Ephesus, already referred to, should be briefly noted in this context.<sup>77</sup> The ecclesiastical historian records the great impression Arethas made on the capital. He was naturally thinking of his physique and the impact he had on the capital's society, as he must have been shown around the imperial city and its landmarks in much the same way

<sup>72</sup> On this, see above, 36–39, and below, 356–64.

<sup>73</sup> For all this see *BASIC* I.2, 782–88. The letter was unknown to Nöldeke.

<sup>74</sup> See below, 321.

<sup>75</sup> Theophanes' silence on Arethas' efforts in behalf of Monophysitism is not surprising. These were conducted quietly and without publicity, as may be inferred from Arethas' letter to Jacob Baradaeus, referred to above.

<sup>76</sup> As is clear from his letter to Jacob Baradaeus, for which see *BASIC* I.2, 782–88.

<sup>77</sup> It is usually quoted in the context of Justin's insanity!

that another, lesser phylarch almost a hundred years before, Amorkesos of the reign of Leo, had been, as described by Malchus.<sup>78</sup> This reference in John of Ephesus established Arethas' contact with the future emperor, Justin II, since Ephesus recorded the impression made by Arethas in the context of some ten years later when Justin II became insane and had to be quieted down by his guardians, who would say to him "Arethas is coming for you" and "he would be still in a moment, and run away and hide himself."<sup>79</sup> The statement is a significant note on both what Arethas must have looked like and, what is more, how he impressed the imperial city.<sup>80</sup> Justinian, who selected him in 529 for the extraordinary honor, and the Monophysites of the capital must have been pleased with their phylarch, as they could point to the wisdom of choosing such an excellent warrior who successfully defended the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* in Oriens against the fire-worshipping Persians and the pagan Lakhmids.

Arethas' visit to Constantinople thus adds a new dimension to his personality: it reveals the Ghassānid phylarch as an astute and shrewd statesman.<sup>81</sup> The capital was already in a receptive mood for him after his smashing victory in 554, while he enhanced his welcome by not retaliating against the Lakhmid 'Amr lest he should violate the peace treaty of 561, which Justinian was anxious should be strictly observed, especially as he was getting very old. With this as a background, Arethas achieved all that he wanted from the emperor, and thus the visit must be adjudged a signal success.

### III. THE BYZANTINE TITLES OF ARETHAS

The Byzantine titles of the Ghassānid phylarch were discussed in 1959,<sup>82</sup> but the passage of time makes a return to this subject desirable. The extraction of the titles of the Ghassānid king and phylarch from Greek and Syriac sources, both literary and epigraphic, was done in a detailed manner which required a special technique. In order that the present discussion some thirty years later may be perfectly clear, it is well that a resumé of the earlier research be given.<sup>83</sup>

#### A

The new technique applied to the problem of ranks and titles, which departs from that used by Nöldeke, consisted in the almost exclusive use of

<sup>78</sup> On this see *BAFIC*, 77–82.

<sup>79</sup> On this see below, 364.

<sup>80</sup> Aigrain speaks of him in the following terms: "la haute taille et l'aspect vigoureux du patrice"; Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1212. Rubin says: "machte die Persönlichkeit dieser sagenhaften Patriarchengestalt aus dem Morgenlande den gewaltigsten Eindruck auf Kaiser und Volk"; *Zeitalter Justinians*, 370.

<sup>81</sup> And this should correct the view that he was a mere soldier.

<sup>82</sup> See the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," *BZ* 52 (1959), 321–43.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 337–39.

the Greek primary sources: the literary evidence contained in the novels and the epigraphic evidence newly discovered in Syria. Both the literary and epigraphic sources were examined in the light of two guiding principles: advances made in the study of Byzantine ranks and titles and constant reference to the career of Arethas. As a result, the two most important groups of titles and dignities, the official sequence<sup>84</sup> and the patriciate, were established and a foundation was laid for the examination of the third group, the other titles that went with some of the ranks of the official sequence and survived only in Syriac translations. In recovering these titles from the Syriac, attention was given to the context and frequency of these terms in Syriac as well as to the principles that guided the investigation of the official sequence and the patriciate.

The sources most affected by this new technique were the Syriac sources that had assumed great importance at the hands of Nöldeke. The new approach to the problem of these ranks and titles changed their status and function. They have been bypassed and adjudged irrelevant for establishing the patriciate and the important titles of the sequence. Consequently their usefulness has been seriously circumscribed and limited to the establishment of the titles of the least important of the three groups. Even in their reduced role and in the limited range of their usefulness to only the third group, they still present persistent problems for interpretation, which derive from *hapax legomena* and contextual puzzles. The discussion, on the other hand, has disclosed their usefulness for the investigation of Ghassānid ranks and titles during the reign of Mundir (569–581).

The application of this new technique to the problem of ranks and titles yielded a number of conclusions of different orders. In addition to correcting Nöldeke's inaccuracies and mistakes, an attempt was made to supplement Nöldeke's discussion, make good his omissions, classify the ranks, and determine their chronology.

As far as the sequence is concerned, two new titles, *clarissimus* and *spectabilis*, have been added to the list of his ranks. The title *illustris*, under which Nöldeke subsumed or with which he associated ἐνδοξότατος, has been shown to be a title quite distinct from *gloriosissimus*, the equivalent of ἐνδοξότατος, and in its Latin form unknown to Nöldeke. The disentanglement of *illustris* from ἐνδοξότατος and the explication of this pair into two separate and distinct titles, the one higher than the other, have given Arethas a new title, *gloriosissimus*, the highest in the sequence, and a higher eminence in the hierarchy than the one *illustris* had given him, thus proving that Arethas assumed the four titles of the sequence one after the other. Measured in terms of decades, Arethas has been proved to have been *clarissimus* in the 520s, *spectabilis*

<sup>84</sup> That is, the sequence *clarissimus* (λαμπρότατος), *spectabilis* (περίβλεπτος), *illustris* (ιλλούσσιος), to which may be added *gloriosissimus* (ἐνδοξότατος).

in the thirties, *illustris* in the forties, and *gloriosissimus* in the fifties. His clarissime was *ex officio*, as the incumbent of the phylarchate of Arabia; his spectabilate was conferred after his elevation to the kingship and supreme phylarchate, to enable the functional rise to be attended by a correspondingly appropriate titular rise; his illustrate was probably conferred for his outstanding record in the second Persian war; and finally, his gloriosissime was probably conferred in recognition of his great victory over Mundir.

As far as the patriciate is concerned, both the date and the occasion have been determined as accurately as possible. The dignity was conferred most probably in connection with his signal military and diplomatic services to the empire in the second Persian war. His reputed trip to Constantinople in 542 or 543 has helped in deciding with some precision the year of the patriciate.<sup>85</sup>

Concerning the other titles of the sequence, certainty could be predicated only with some reservations owing to the nature of the Syriac sources and the problems they present.<sup>86</sup> Arethas probably added the two titles *famosissimus* (πανεύφημος) and *excellentissimus* (ὑπερφύεστατος) to his gloriosissime during his visits to the capital in 563 and 569.

## B

One of Nöldeke's substantial contributions to the history of the Ghassānid dynasty was his discussion of the titles of Arethas and Mundir and his extraction from the Oriental sources of the Byzantine titles that had been translated into Syriac. But early in the century Rudolph Brünnow questioned the chronology suggested by Nöldeke for the conferment of these titles. In an appendix<sup>87</sup> to the article on the titles of Arethas, the present writer has discussed the two divergent views, concluding that "the advancement of Arethas was neither sudden and early as Nöldeke thought nor sudden and late as Brünnow thought, but gradual and relaxed, spread throughout his long reign." The problem was taken up again by E. Chrysos.<sup>88</sup> Although his article was devoted to the title *basileus* as applied to the Byzantine ruler, it touched on the titles of the Ghassānid king, Arethas, in a footnote<sup>89</sup> in which the

<sup>85</sup> This dating is now modified in light of A. Alt's article on the Qaşr al-Hayr Greek inscription which I had missed when I wrote in the 1950s. For his article and for the chronological modification that sets the patriciate in the 550s, in the context of Arethas' great victory over Mundir, see below, 291-94.

<sup>86</sup> The transliteration of these Syriac titles into English, undertaken in "Patriciate," 333-37, has been refined by Professor Franz Rosenthal, based on Nöldeke's recommendations: for *saggī qūlāsā* (πανεύφημος), read *saggī qullāsā*; for *fē* (in *fē b'rabbūthā*) (μεγαλοπρεπέστατος), read *pē*; and for *m'yāthbrūthā*, read *m'yattrūthā* or simply *myattrūthā*.

<sup>87</sup> See "Patriciate," 341-43.

<sup>88</sup> "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ in Early Byzantine International Relations," *DOP* 32 (1978), 31-75.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 49 note 13.

author categorically asserted that these high titles, including the dignity of *patricius*, were conferred on the Ghassānid king around 530. The reply to this view came as part of an article, not on the titles of Arethas, but on the titulature of Emperor Heraclius.<sup>90</sup>

Chrysos seems to be absolutely sure about how and when these titles were conferred on Arethas in spite of the fact that the problem is complex and the evidence is so fragmentary that it is impossible to be so sure on the problem of these titles: (a) the patriciate of Arethas appears in an inscription dated A.D. 559, late in his reign, and I have argued that its conferment took place in the early forties; (b) against this, Chrysos states categorically that the patriciate was conferred in A.D. 530, but what the evidence is for the statement is nowhere to be found in the article; (c) I have argued that his rank was *illustris* when the patriciate was conferred on him and that the *gloriosissime* was conferred in the fifties. Chrysos states categorically that the latter was conferred with the patriciate and that this happened in A.D. 530, for which there is no evidence. My conclusions on the *cursus honorum* of Arethas in the sixth century took into account, and were based on, certain chronological indications in the sources, especially the date of the Novel on Arabia, namely, A.D. 536, but they were drawn more than twenty years ago. In due course I shall re-examine the Ghassānid *cursus honorum* for the entire sixth century and modify any views when new evidence justifies modification.<sup>91</sup>

Since that reply was made in 1981 no new evidence has turned up to support the view that these titles were conferred on Arethas around 530. To what has been said in the reply, it might be added the Chrysos vouched for the early conferment of these titles on Arethas because he argued that Arethas was not a true king, *basileus*, and not made such by Justinian, but was made archphylarch.<sup>92</sup> Hence, as a substitute for the title king, he was given these other high titles, such as *gloriosissimus*. These views have been rejected by the present writer both in 1981 and in the course of the present volume.<sup>93</sup> Chrysos' view, however, may derive some support from an examination of the titles of Arethas' son who succeeded him in 569. These high titles for Mundir appear in authentic Syriac sources and appear applied to him early in his reign.<sup>94</sup> This, however, is far from decisive. Forty years divide the *Basileia* of Arethas in 529 from that of Mundir in 569. When Mundir succeeded his father as

<sup>90</sup> See the present writer in "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 288–96.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 292–93.

<sup>92</sup> Chrysos, "Title," 46–52 (and repeated on p. 64).

<sup>93</sup> See above, 95–109.

<sup>94</sup> For these see Nöldeke, *GF*, 13–15, and below, 512–17.



king in 569, the Ghassānid *Basileia* had been firmly established. Arethas had justified the expectations placed on him and won the confidence of Justinian by his successful defense of the oriental *limes*, especially against the inveterate enemy, Muḍir, whom he killed in a great battle in 554. By the end of his reign Arethas had conferred on him all the highest titles and also the patriciate, and so it was only natural after the new experiment with the Arab federates that both the *Basileia* and the high titles should be conferred on his successor as soon as he died. Moreover, as has been argued, and will be argued in greater detail later, Muḍir was probably co-ruler with Arethas since 563 when he visited Constantinople with his father to settle the question of succession.<sup>95</sup> Hence it is natural that he should have been endowed with what his father had been endowed with. But forty years earlier the situation was quite different. The conferment of the *Basileia* on Arethas in 529 was a new experiment, and the administration was most probably hesitant to lavish titles that normally did not go with the new position created for Arethas. These titles were strictly applied to certain offices in the Byzantine administration, and, in spite of his kingship, Arethas remained *strictu sensu* in the Byzantine administrative system a phylarch and he is referred to as such even in 563 when he visited the capital, full of years and honors. But this office of phylarch had attached to it the title *clarissimus*, and the crucial novel on Arabia has shown that the new king was favored with another, but not much higher rank, namely, *spectabilis*, which reflects the cautious Byzantine attitude toward applying titles to the newly created federate post.

The chronology of the conferment of these titles on Arethas will remain problematical and controversial. Without the discovery of new dated inscriptions, it is impossible to advance the question further or to reach definite conclusions on the speed and rhythm with which they were conferred. But the problem is relatively unimportant; more important is that these highest titles were actually conferred on the Ghassānid king and that this was one of the most telling indications of the Ghassānid integration into the Byzantine administrative system.

### C

After the lapse of some thirty years, the following modifications and amplifications on what has been said on the titles of Arethas may be attempted.

1. The *patriciatus*: as has been argued earlier in this chapter, this highest dignity was *not* conferred on Arethas early in his career when he was created supreme phylarch in 529. This view was put forward in the 1950s and was defended in the seventies. More support for it was expressed earlier in this

<sup>95</sup> See below, 313–14.

chapter. But the epigraphic evidence from the Greek inscription found at Qaşr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, which refers to Arethas as *patricius*,<sup>96</sup> has given strong support to this view; and it has been shown in the section that analyzed that inscription, dated A.D. 558/59, that the patriciate was most probably conferred on Arethas in the 550s, after his great victory over Mundir and in recognition of it.<sup>97</sup> This dating is more defensible than the earlier one which was assigned to the 540s and was predicated on the strength of Arethas' services to Byzantium in the second Persian war. For it may be argued that his services then may not have been clear to everyone in Byzantium, and the chief historian of the reign had cast so much suspicion on his conduct during the Assyrian campaign of 541. But there was no doubt whatsoever concerning the victory of 554 and its importance to Byzantium; hence, in addition to the date of the Greek inscription in the 550s, there is the background of the battle of Chalcis, an incontestably decisive Byzantine as well as Ghassānid victory.<sup>98</sup>

The patriciate, not an ἄρχή (office) but an ἄξια (dignity), and the highest one that Byzantium could confer, was conferred on the Ghassānid Arethas. It was remarkable in view of both the ethnic origin and the confessional affiliation of this sixth-century Arab. The image of the Arabs was always haunted, in this century, by the charge of *prodosia* to the cause of the Romans, and Arethas himself was its victim. The phylarch was also, from the point of view of Chalcedonian Constantinople, a heretic who belonged to the Monophysite confession and, what is more, was its chief secular supporter.<sup>99</sup> In view of these facts, the conferment of the dignity was most significant, and, as far as is known from the sources, he was the first Arab to be endowed with the patriciate.<sup>100</sup> He also had the distinction of being the father of a *patricius*, his

<sup>96</sup> See above, 260.

<sup>97</sup> See above, 261.

<sup>98</sup> In the literature that has appeared on the patriciate since the 1950s, two items relating to the Arabs in the 6th century need to be noticed: (1) R. Guiland noted the patriciate of Arethas but missed that of Mundir, which surely should be added to the list of *patricii* in the 6th century. The notice is poorly documented; see his "Les patrices byzantines du VIe siècle," *Palaeologia* 7, The Paleological Association of Japan, Inc. (Osaka, 1959), 277; (2) R. Mathiesen also noted the patriciate of Arethas, but as he followed Guiland, he unfortunately missed the patriciate of Mundir; in one of his notes, ambassador Julian goes to Arethas in 571/72 (citing Malalas [Bonn ed.], p. 457, and Theophanes, A.M. 6064), but Arethas was already dead at that time, and he received no embassy from Julian, who was sent to the rulers of South Arabia and Abyssinia. See R. Mathiesen, "Patricians as Diplomats in Late Antiquity," *BZ* 79 (1986), 40 note 18. The reference to Arethas in Theophanes (p. 244, line 16) is a mistake for Elesboas, who was Negus of Abyssinia (Malalas, p. 458, line 17).

<sup>99</sup> As is well known, the patriciate was denied the Vandal king Gelimer by Justinian because of his Arian heretical persuasion. Of course, Monophysitism was a less serious heresy than Arianism.

<sup>100</sup> As has been argued in *BAFIC*, the Arab phylarch Amorkesos, of the reign of Leo in

son and successor, Mundir, in spite of the fact that the patriciate was not hereditary and that *patricii nati* no longer existed after Constantine instituted the new *patriciatus*.<sup>101</sup>

This highest Byzantine dignity was conferred on a number of Romans.<sup>102</sup> Its conferment on non-Romans—barbarians, princes, and kings—was rare, and most of these cases belonged to the Roman Occident, occupied by the Germanic princes.<sup>103</sup> In the Orient it was much more rare; only three are cited, and Arethas is one of them. So the patriciate of Arethas was indeed a rare honor, the conferment<sup>104</sup> of which was also eloquent of the relationship that obtained between Justinian and Arethas. It is especially so since the *patricius* was often referred to as “father of the emperor” (*pater augusti*) and the emperor used to address the *patricius* as “my father.” Thus if a dignity or a title, of the many that Arethas had, reflects the special relationship between Justinian and Arethas, it is the patriciate. Its conferment reflected the absolute confidence of Byzantium in the loyalty and worth of the Arab king, just as his assumption of the imperial *gentilicium*, Flavius, reflected his own sense of loyalty to the imperial family which carried the *nomen gentile* of the Second Flavians.

## 2. Three titles: further research on the titles of Arethas undertaken since

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the 5th century, was not endowed with the patriciate around 470 when he visited Constantinople. Since the presentation of that argument in 1984, it has occurred to the present writer that the patriciate may have been conferred at a later date. There is the curious fact that the Arabic sources refer to him as “al-Biṭriq” (*patricius*). This reference was explained away as either a confusion with a seemingly Arabic homophone or homonym which means something else or a confusion with the patriciate of Arethas in the 6th century. Yet the statement in the Arabic sources is striking and could possibly be reflecting a fact. It is true that a careful analysis of the fragment in Malchus has revealed no evidence that Amorkesos was endowed with the patriciate around 470, but that date was the first year of the federate relationship with Byzantium and of his service as a phylarch. It is therefore perfectly possible that after years of service to Byzantium in that office, he was rewarded by Zeno or Anastasius with the patriciate. Thus the Greek source, Malchus, can be reconciled with the Arabic sources that speak of Amorkesos as “Biṭriq.”

<sup>101</sup> Mundir, of course, received the title not because he was Arethas’ son but because he was his successor. Nevertheless, the case of the two Ghassānids may be unique as an example of father and son being endowed with the patriciate. For more on this, see below, 512–17.

<sup>102</sup> See Mathiesen, “Patricians as Diplomats,” 37, where the number of patricians is calculated.

<sup>103</sup> The conferment of the patriciate was either by investiture with insignia or by *codicilli*. In the 6th century it was done by *codicilli*, so Arethas must have received a patent, or a brief, as the instrument that endowed him with the patriciate. On this see J. B. Bury, *The Imperial Administrative System* (London, 1911), 20–21.

<sup>104</sup> This is further evidence for the case against Procopius’ veracity in his account of Arethas, whom he presented as a traitor and incompetent. If Procopius was alive and in Constantinople in 563, he must have been especially chagrined at seeing the “traitor” Arethas appear in the city and, full of years and honors, be addressed by the emperor as “my father.” The implication of Arethas’ visit to Constantinople in 563 is that the emperor completely disregarded Procopius and his *prodosia* charge.

the fifties has revealed three more titles to be added to the list enumerated earlier in this chapter.

a. The Syriac sources have revealed the title *râhem l̄mashîhâ*,<sup>105</sup> "Christ-loving" (Greek: φιλόχριστος), which reflects the place of Arethas in the Syriac eastern church and its perception of him as a pious Christian who rendered important service to the resuscitation of its hierarchy. The title also brings to mind the Byzantine *imperial* title, φιλόχριστος.<sup>106</sup>

b. Another title revealed by the Syriac sources is *mbaimnâ*,<sup>107</sup> *pius* (Greek: εὐσεβής). This title, like the preceding one, reflects the Syriac church's perception of Arethas and also recalls *pius*, εὐσεβής, as a component of the imperial titlature.<sup>108</sup>

c. The Qaşr al-Ḥayr inscription has yielded a new and important title, Φλαβίος, "Flavius." This was the *gentilicium* assumed by Constantine and after him by his dynasty, the Second Flavians.<sup>109</sup> It was popular in the proto-Byzantine period and was assumed both by ordinary soldiers, distinguished soldiers, and dignitaries of the state.<sup>110</sup> This name/title presents some problems: it is not always certain whether it was simply a component of the name,<sup>111</sup>

<sup>105</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 14, line 3.

<sup>106</sup> For the title φιλόχριστος, see G. Rösch, *ONOMA ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ*, Byzantina Vindobonensia (Vienna, 1978), 65, and the more extensive treatment in O. Kresten, "Iustinianos I., 'Der Christusliebende' Kaiser," *Römische historische Mitteilungen* 21 (Rome-Vienna, 1979), 83–109. This title formed part of the Christian component in the imperial titlature. Rösch (op. cit., 65) remarks of it in regard to Justinian: "Zuerst führt (wahrscheinlich) Iustinianos I. in seinem 'Edictum de recta fide' von 551 dieses Epitheton, welches offensichtlich die Rechtgläubigkeit und die Macht des Kaisers, in Religionsfragen zuentscheiden, betont." The remark applies equally well to Arethas who, too, presided over Monophysite church councils and took part in theological controversies.

<sup>107</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 14, line 4.

<sup>108</sup> On *pius* (εὐσεβής) and its transformation from a pagan title into a Christian imperial one, see Rösch, *ONOMA*, 42–43. The recovery of the ranks and titles of Arethas from the Syriac sources, undertaken in this volume and in an article in the 1950s, fulfills E. Honigmann's hopes, expressed in his review, "L'histoire ecclésiastique de Jean d'Éphèse," *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 625 and note 1.

<sup>109</sup> On "Flavius" as a component in the imperial titlature, see Rösch, *ONOMA*, 49–50. On the subsequent fate of this title, see the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *DOP* 26 (1972), 304–5, and "Titlature," 294–95.

<sup>110</sup> See Rösch, *ONOMA*, 49–50, and J. G. Keenan, "The *Nomina* Flavius and Aurelius: A Question of Status in Byzantine Egypt," diss. (Yale University, 1968). Keenan has argued that in Byzantine Egypt "the Flavii constituted an upper class minority of persons important not only for their position in government, but also for their wealth and their extensive landholdings"; "*Nomina*," p. ii; see also pp. 137–38. Keenan's dissertation was published in condensed form in "The Names Flavius and Aurelius as Status Designations in Later Roman Egypt," *ZPE* 11 (1973), 33–63; 13 (1974), 283–304; see esp. pp. 38–39 on the German Flavii. For the assumption of Flavius by ordinary people of no great standing, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 16 notes 1, 2. For the name's popularity among the soldiers, see G. M. Browne, *Documentary Papyri from the Michigan Collection*, American Studies in Papyrology 6 (Toronto, 1970), 55.

<sup>111</sup> Its place in the imperial titlature is always before the name of the emperor, and so it

as in the case of a soldier, or whether it was a title, as when it was assumed by a Belisarius or an Arethas; also, it is not clear whether it was conferred by the emperor as an honor or was assumed by a dignitary as an expression of loyalty to the emperor.<sup>112</sup>

In any case, "Flavius" was a significant Ghassānid title.<sup>113</sup> It is distinguished from all other titles<sup>114</sup> by being a *gentilicium*, the imperial *gentilicium* that was assumed by the emperor himself. The title made the bond that united vassal and emperor even closer by titularly allying the Ghassānid royal house to the imperial Byzantine dynasty.<sup>115</sup> It recalls the expression of loyalty of another Arab royal house three centuries before to another Roman dynasty: the Palmyrene royal house in the third century assumed the *gentilicium* "Septimius" as an expression of loyalty to the Severan dynasty<sup>116</sup> in much the same

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is in the Ghassānid inscriptions before the name of the Ghassānid king/phylarch; see Rösch, *ONOMA*, 165–71.

<sup>112</sup> Even Rudolph Schöll himself was not quite sure who had the right to be "Flavius," as is clear from his reply to Nöldeke; but at least it is clear that he thought "Flavius" was conferred by the emperor since he speaks of "die Ertheilung des Namens Flavius"; see *GF*, 15 note 3. On the other hand, Ferdinand Lot thought its assumption involved the question of legitimacy, genuine imperial legitimacy in the Orient for the emperors and pretensions to imperial legitimacy on the part of Germanic barbarian kings in the Occident; see *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages*, trans. Philip and Mariette Leon (New York, 1961), 220, 240, 287.

<sup>113</sup> It is noteworthy that it alone is mentioned with the patriciate in the Greek inscription on Arethas, above, 260. This could confirm Schöll's view, expressed with reservation, that it was conferred by the emperor on a worthy subject together with the patriciate; see Nöldeke, *GF*, 15 note 3.

<sup>114</sup> Since it is really a name more than a title such as *clarissimus*, and it was a component in the full name of the emperor or other dignitaries who had it. As German expresses it, it is really a "Namenstitel," as in Rösch, *ONOMA*, 49, lines 9–10.

<sup>115</sup> Thus the royal house of Ghassān in Oriens appears as *Flavii*; for at least three other members of the dynasty who had this *gentilicium*, see below, 495, 509, and above, 66, 261 note 145. This *gentilicium* poses an extremely interesting problem. The Ghassānids were and remained Arabs possessed of a strong Arab identity, even after being federates of the Romans for a long time; they never assumed non-Arab names; hence the assumption of the *gentilicium*, the foreign "Flavius," is a curiosity and could only be a splendid proof of their loyalty to the house of Justin. The assumption of the name of a tribe other than his own when an Arab wanted to affiliate himself with it is not unknown, and it was done for a variety of reasons in pre-Islamic times; those tribes that changed their tribal affiliations were called al-Nawāqil. The historian of pre-Islamic Arabia, Hishām, wrote a monograph on the Nawāqil of the tribal group Quḍā'a; see *BAFOC*, 359. But the change of allegiance, even though only onomastically, involving a non-Arab tribe is striking and could only, as has been said, be a reflection of the strong sense of loyalty that the Ghassānids developed toward their overlords, the Byzantine emperors. By assuming the *gentilicium* "Flavius," Arethas became, in an Arab sense, the client—the *mawlā*—of the ruling dynasty in Constantinople.

<sup>116</sup> On the Palmyrene royal house of Zenobia and Odenathus and their assumption of "Septimius," see M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities* (Oxford, 1932) and D. Schlumberger, "Les gentilices romaines des Palmyréniens," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 9 (1942–45), 59 ff. Apparently "Septimius" was borne by almost all of the Palmyrene aristocracy, who also were made Roman

way that three centuries later the Ghassānids assumed "Flavius," the *gentilicium* of the dynasty of the Second Flavians.

These three new titles—"Flavius," "pius," and "philochristos"—were also components of the imperial titulature. This raises the question of whether the Ghassānid *basileus* began to have a royal titulature not unlike that of the emperor of Constantinople.<sup>117</sup>

#### IV. PROCOPIUS AND THE ARABS

Both the attitude of Procopius toward the Arabs and their image in his works were treated in the 1950s in three articles.<sup>118</sup> In the course of the thirty years or so that elapsed since then, much has happened that justifies a return to the subject. New research has appeared on Procopius that is relevant to the theme "Procopius and the Arabs."<sup>119</sup> Moreover, the present writer has extended his research to all three centuries of the proto-Byzantine period. This extension, especially as it encompasses the sixth century, has made possible a new approach to the theme, which is now more complex. The title given to two of the earlier articles, "Procopius and Arethas," might have given the impression that the discussion involved a literary vignette painted by Procopius. But what is involved is much more than a Byzantine historian and his image of an Arab client-king or phylarch by the name of Arethas. The entire Arab and Arabian policy of Justinian is involved, which is crucial to understand in view of the bloody Arab-Byzantine encounter in the seventh century under the banner of Islam as well as the dramatic change in the course of Arab-Byzantine relations not long after the death of Justinian. As far as Procopius is concerned, the discussion will shed more light on his technique

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citizens. Whether Arethas and members of the Ghassānid royal house were made honorary Roman citizens when these extraordinary titles were conferred on them is not clear.

<sup>117</sup> The sons of Arethas who were also phylarchs no doubt had titles, too. As the problem of these titles is clear during the reign of his son, Mundir, the discussion is postponed till then; see below, 498–500.

<sup>118</sup> See the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ* 50 (1957), 39–65 and 362–82; and "Procopius and Kinda," *BZ* 53 (1960), 74–78.

<sup>119</sup> Four works may be singled out as most relevant: B. Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians* (Berlin, 1960); F. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie, von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich, 1971); J. A. S. Evans, *Procopius* (Berkeley, 1972); and the more substantial and extensive work of Averil Cameron, *Procopius* (Berkeley, 1985). The first is the most relevant; after writing his monumental article on Procopius in *RE*, Rubin wrote a detailed history of the reign of which Procopius was the chief historian, and he addressed the theme "Procopius and the Arabs." The second gave extensive coverage to *Kaiserkritik*, a theme already treated in "Procopius and Arethas" and "Procopius and Kinda," but which may now be revisited in light of Tinnefeld's treatment. The last two books provide new insights into Procopius, the man and his work. Among other things, Cameron's volume reveals Procopius as a classicizing author, unites his three works for inspection as one *oeuvre*, offers a new chronology for the composition of two of his works, and casts doubts on his reputation as a historian and his claims to be considered as such.



when he chose to write *cum ira et studio*, a matter of some importance since he is the chief historian of this crucial reign. This section, written years after the aforementioned articles, may sound like a reprise, but it attempts to fulfill the expectations of scholars who have written on Procopius, including the most recent one, Averil Cameron, who, in various parts of her work, issued warnings on how to use him, how to extract the truth from his narrative, and how to treat his material when he is the only source.<sup>120</sup> Procopius is both the central figure in sixth-century historiography and the chief historian of Justinian's reign. Furthermore, he left behind a massive work,<sup>121</sup> and, as has been truly said, "one of the problems of treating this work is that of coping with its sheer bulk and the variety of its subject matter" (the writer of this statement was thinking of only the *Wars*). Thus only by the division of labor can this massive work be fruitfully studied by a team of specialists each dealing with their own province.<sup>122</sup>

This section is a step in that direction, as it sums up the present writer's final views on the subject treated in various chapters in this volume.<sup>123</sup> The complexity of the theme, the new dimensions that it has acquired since the earlier studies, and the light that the discussion sheds on Byzantine historiography as well as Byzantine history in the sixth century have become apparent. This discussion builds on the three earlier Procopian studies,<sup>124</sup> but as these are accessible,<sup>125</sup> there is no need to reproduce them here. A brief resumé

<sup>120</sup> Passim in Cameron's *Procopius*, esp. the "Introduction," ix–xiii.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>122</sup> Witness the work of Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians*, in which he made a valiant effort to do justice to the Arab problem in Byzantine history and historiography in the 6th century and supported this with extensive bibliography. But one must be a specialist on Arab-Byzantine relations, be able to handle the Arabic sources, and have a thorough knowledge of Arab history in the 6th century in order to make a truly professional contribution. However, the author deserves credit for his effort and industry.

<sup>123</sup> And it is a contribution to the study of one sector of the barbarian world which Procopius describes, namely, the Arabs, thus complementing studies on other sectors, such as the Slavs and the Germans. In his *History* Procopius makes his final mention of the Arabs in 554; so it is appropriate to place this section on him after that on the second four-year period in which 554 was discussed in detail, the year of the decisive Ghassānid victory over the Lakhmid Mundir. For Procopius' knowledge of the death of Mundir in 554, see below, 306.

<sup>124</sup> These have carried conviction with most scholars, including the latest writer on Procopius, Averil Cameron; see her *Procopius*, 125–26. Yet the discussion has not reached the saturation point as she suggests since there are some who apparently have not been converted, e.g., E. Chrysos who as recently as 1977 still spoke of Arethas' "notorious treachery"; see "Title," 48 note 119. There was an exchange between the present writer and V. Christides in the early 1970s on the charge of *prodosia* leveled by Procopius against Arethas; Professor Christides has since written expressing his agreement with this writer's views (1985); see my collected studies (below, note 125), p. xi. As has been indicated in "Procopius and Arethas," sober scholars such as Diehl, Aigrain, and Stein must have been aware of Procopius' mendacity in his account of Arethas and so completely ignored it.

<sup>125</sup> Reprinted in *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the Rise of Islam* (London, 1988).

of the conclusions reached in these articles will be given at the opening of each of the following sections in order that the new gains and advances may become clear.

## I

It was noted in the earlier studies that Procopius indulged in a series of *suppressio veri*<sup>126</sup> and *suggestio falsi* involving Arethas and that this encompassed his military career in the two Persian wars, his Roman connections, and his religious affiliation. The concentration was on the area of his military career, and a list of a series of his omissions and misrepresentations was given. It is best therefore to start the new series with his military career.

## A

This series comprises not only Arethas but also his father, Jabala.

1. Jabala, Arethas' father, had dominated Arab-Byzantine relations for a quarter century or so in the reigns of three emperors—Anastasius, Justin I, and two years of Justinian's. His role begins with the *foedus* of 502, the *terminus a quo* of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, and ends on the battlefield of Thannūris in 528 when he laid down his life fighting for Byzantium against the Persians. Yet he is completely absent from the pages of Procopius and appears only as part of the patronymic of his son Arethas, all of which enables Procopius to present Arethas as "incompetent" and "treacherous," springing *ex nihilo*, rather than as someone descended from a distinguished federate in the service of Rome—Jabala.<sup>127</sup>

2. The series of omissions and misrepresentations involving Jabala's son Arethas comprise the two Persian wars and the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war.<sup>128</sup>

a. The first Persian war: as has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, Procopius' garbled account of the war, as far as the Arabs are concerned, involves the following: the punitive expedition against the Lakhmid Mundir in 528; the battle of Thannūris, in the same year; the Samaritan revolt of 529; the battle of Daras in 530; the battle of Callinicum in 531; operations in Fourth Armenia centering around Martyropolis in 532; and of course his account of the conferment of the ἀξίωμα βασιλέως on Arethas. In addition to this list that involves Arethas, there is his account of Phoinikōn and Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia (Arethas' brother and son of Jabala) and of federate Kinda.

b. The second Persian war: in the introduction to this chapter the case

<sup>126</sup> One may quote in this connection from Cameron's *Procopius*, 225: "For a writer of the sixth century, Procopius is as remarkable for what he leaves out, as for what he does have to say."

<sup>127</sup> See the section on Jabala above, 63–67.

<sup>128</sup> And possibly the Vandal war, for which see above, 180–82.

for the participation of Arethas and the Ghassānids in every campaign of this war has been stated. Other sources have been drawn upon for arguing against Procopius' account which suggests Ghassānid participation only in the Assyrian campaign of 541. Another source, Agapius, has been drawn upon for arguing that Arethas conducted a campaign against the Persians in 542; furthermore, Procopius' account of the *Strata* dispute and the Assyrian campaign of 541 have been reexamined and have been elaborated upon a propos of Procopius' handling of the role of Arethas.

c. The Lakhmid-Ghassānid war: Procopius' account of this war, which lasted for some ten years after the conclusion of the Byzantine-Persian Peace of 545, has been reexamined. It has been argued that this war was not only a private Lakhmid-Ghassānid war but a war waged between the two groups of Arabs as federates of the two powers, Persia and Byzantium. Most serious in Procopius' garbled account is his suppression of the fact that Arethas won a great victory over Mundir in 554 of which Procopius certainly knew.<sup>129</sup>

d. Procopius' *Buildings*: in his account of the girdle of fortifications with which Justinian encircled his empire, Procopius suddenly stops his narrative in Oriens while describing these fortifications in the Orient at Palmyra. Consequently there is a gap in his account, which thus does not cover the long sector from Palmyra to Ayla, on the Gulf of Eilat. As has been argued in this volume, this was the sector that had been entrusted in large measure to the Ghassānids, and Procopius is completely silent on their watch over this segment of the *Limes orientalis*.<sup>130</sup>

## B

In the two earlier articles on Arethas, something was also said on Procopius' handling of Arethas' Roman connections and Christian affiliation.<sup>131</sup> But these articles were written before the present writer's treatment of Are-

<sup>129</sup> For the series of omissions and misrepresentations involving these three wars—the first and second Persian wars and the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war—see the detailed discussion above, 131–36, 139–42, 210–16, 219–40. In this chapter they are simply enumerated in order to give a synoptic view of their extent.

In this connection, other examples of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in Procopius, not related to the Ghassānids, may be pointed out. (1) The capture of Theodosiopolis in Armenia in 502 by the Persian king Kawad is completely left out, a fact well brought out by Katerina Synelle in *Oi διπλωματικές σχέσεις Βυζαντίου και Περσίας έως τὸν σ' αἰώνα*, Historical Monographs 1, ed. E. Chrysos (Athens, 1986), 78–79. (2) Perhaps also the unceremonious treatment of Mundus' campaign against Dalmatia in the Balkans in 536 when he defeated the Goths and captured Salone. Procopius may have wanted to play this down in order to enhance the achievement of Belisarius in the Italian campaign; see *History*, V.v.2, 11.

<sup>130</sup> On this see BASIC II. This is an entirely new area of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* not touched on in the three articles cited above, note 118.

<sup>131</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 62–65.

thas' titles and patriciate appeared.<sup>132</sup> The same applies to his treatment of the Christian affiliation of Arethas.<sup>133</sup> This had been touched upon briefly in the fifties, but it has become much clearer now that the chapter Arethas wrote in the history of Syrian Christianity has been examined in detail in this volume.<sup>134</sup> The complete silence of Procopius on both these areas becomes even more noticeable.

## C

The scope of Procopius' silence and misrepresentation should have become clear in the course of this book, as it involved not only Arethas but also the entire Ghassānid dynasty from its inception as a federate ally of Byzantium at the opening of the sixth century. Jabala as a figure in Arab-Byzantine relations is entirely ignored. The brotherhood of Arethas and Abū Karib is obscured, as is Abū Karib's descent from Jabala. Kinda also suffered from Procopius' account in much the same way that Ghassān did, and so the two principal allies of Justinian were denigrated.<sup>135</sup> To these may be added the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula, who are referred to in uncomplimentary terms as raiders of the Roman frontier and of Roman territory.<sup>136</sup> These are referred to as Saracens, as are the two federates, Kinda and Ghassān,<sup>137</sup> a terminological device on the part of Procopius to present the *foederati* as rude and uncivilized pastoralists, exactly in the same category as their congeners in the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, although Arethas was the main target of Procopius' criticism, the Arabs in general are the object of his disapproving comments, both federates living in Oriens and non-federate pastoralists living in the Peninsula. The former are treacherous as allies; the latter are dangerous enemies. His attitude recalls Ammianus Marcellinus' summing up of the Arabs in the well-known phrase: "Saraceni tamen nec amici nobis umquam nec hostes optandi."

## D

In this context of the examination of Procopius' series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, it is not inappropriate to discuss the problem of other

<sup>132</sup> "The Patriciate of Arethas," 321–43.

<sup>133</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 61–62.

<sup>134</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 734–92.

<sup>135</sup> For these topics see the relevant sections in this chapter.

<sup>136</sup> For such references, see *History*, I.xix.11, 15; II.xvi.18; II.xix.12; *Buildings*, II.vi.15; *Anecdota*, XVIII.22. Perhaps *History*, I.xix.15 is the most damning as it describes them as cannibals.

<sup>137</sup> Instead of calling them "allies," σύμμαχοι or ὑπόσπονδοι. In his account of the Assyrian campaign, he calls them ἐπόμενοι, "followers" of Arethas: *History*, II.xix.15.

sources with whom he may be compared (though often he is the only source for what he says).<sup>138</sup>

In the course of this volume many sources have been used which could serve as a check on Procopius, and they should be recalled here. (1) The Greek sources of Malalas and Nonnosus correct Procopius on the operations of the first Persian war and on Kinda respectively, while Theophanes provides data on the Ghassānids and Kinda during the reign of Anastasius. (2) The Syriac sources are most helpful: Zacharia Scholasticus is invaluable for the reign of Justin and for Jabala. The Syriac Monophysite documents are fundamental for understanding the role of Arethas in the history of Monophysitism in the sixth century; and John of Ephesus has important incidental references to Arethas, even though the part on the reign of Justinian and Arethas in his *History* has not survived. But Michael the Syrian has preserved some precious morsels on Arethas and Monophysitism, above all on the crowning victory of Arethas in the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war in 554. (3) The Arabic sources have their value too. Although they are indispensable for the *later* history of the dynasty, they do correct Procopius on Arethas and are a check on him; such is the Arabic text of Ibn al-Rāhib and that of Agapius on the campaign of Arethas against Persia in 542.

## II

That the chief historian of the reign of Justinian should have adopted such a hostile and negative attitude to the Arabs—both the pastoralists of the Peninsula and the federates of Oriens who were so successfully defending the Roman frontier—raises the question of his motives for doing so. These were analyzed in the earlier studies and were shown to be related to three important areas: (1) *Kaiserkritik* directed against Justinian;<sup>139</sup> (2) partiality to Belisarius, to whom Procopius was appointed secretary and of whom he became *praeco*; and (3) antipathy toward Theodora and the Monophysite confession to which she and the Arabs belonged.<sup>140</sup> Thus Procopius' untowardliness was related to the imperial family in Constantinople and some of its associates, such as Belisarius, and the thrust of the argument was conducted on the level of deriva-

<sup>138</sup> It is regrettable that John Lydus' *History* of the wars of Justinian has not survived since he would have been a check on Procopius and, as G. Downey has said, "it would be interesting to know how much of Procopius's reputation rests on the fact that the sources with which his work can be confronted are rather meagre." See Downey, "The Persian Campaign in Syria in A.D. 540," *Speculum* 28 (1953), 342.

<sup>139</sup> For *Kaiserkritik* as it relates to Justinian in Procopius, see Tinnefeld, *Kategorien*, 17–36, which analyzes the various motives for Procopius' criticism of Justinian.

<sup>140</sup> Items (2) and (3) have been briefly discussed by the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," 61–65.

tiveness. But further investigation of the problem suggests that other motives may have been in operation, and they are not derivative but related to the Ghassānids and the Arabs as one of the ethnic groups with which Byzantium had to deal.

1. Procopius hailed from Caesarea, which seems to have experienced Saracen raids, even though it was a seaport in Palaestina Prima far from the *limes*.<sup>141</sup> Moreover, according to one of the major sources for the Arab Muslim conquest of Palestine, there was an Arab community in Caesarea<sup>142</sup> when it was conquered by the Muslim Arabs in 641. It is not impossible that his antipathies developed quite early in his impressionable years at Caesarea, where there may have been some racial friction.<sup>143</sup>

2. Procopius was appointed *symbolos* to Belisarius in 527 and thus was for the five years of the first Persian war a close associate of Belisarius and on the spot on the eastern front. This was the period that witnessed the Ghassānid return to the service of Byzantium and their active participation in the campaigns of the Persian war. Both Jabala and Arethas distinguished themselves in the war and were visible, and both were strong personalities for which there is testimonial evidence.<sup>144</sup> It is possible that Procopius had a brush with one or both of the Ghassānid figures and that this ill-disposed him toward them and their dynasty.<sup>145</sup>

3. Finally, there may have been an element that might be described as cultural, especially when the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula are concerned. It is well known that Procopius was not sympathetic to the barbarian world to which the Arabs in his arithmetic belonged.<sup>146</sup> And it is noteworthy that his antipathies toward the barbarians come out not only as a reflection of xenophobia and ethnocentricity but also as an expression of his *Kaiserkritik*.<sup>147</sup>

All these factors could have been operative, especially as the personal

<sup>141</sup> On Saracen raids against Caesarea, see K. Holum, "Archaeological Evidence for the Fall of Byzantine Caesarea," *BASOR* 286 (1992), 73–85.

<sup>142</sup> See Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, 1959), I, 168. The Arab community in Caesarea may have been related to the Kindite federates of Qays, who was installed in Palestine as *hēgemōn* ca. 530. On the Arab woman of Caesarea named Shaqrā'/Sha'thā', whom the poet Ḥassān admired in pre-Islamic times, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Synesius' attitude toward the Jews of Cyrene; see *BAFIC*, 14–15. On Maurice, Arabissos, and his anti-Ghassānid attitude, see below, 610–11.

<sup>144</sup> On the impression made by Arethas on Constantinople, see below, 339.

<sup>145</sup> Friction between Maurice and the Ghassānid Mundīr affords an illuminating parallel; see below, 453–55.

<sup>146</sup> On Procopius' attitude toward the "barbarians," see Cameron, *Procopius*, 239–40.

<sup>147</sup> Procopius' attitude toward the barbarians is linked to what Tinnefeld calls his *Reichsbewusstsein*, as one of the explanations of his *Kaiserkritik*; see Tinnefeld, *Kategorien*, 26 and 188, where he observes that Procopius took the emperor to task for his friendly gestures to the barbarians and for his buying peace from the Huns with gold.



element in Procopius' antipathies and its preponderance over the ideological has been noted and emphasized.<sup>148</sup> So these personal elements have to be taken into account and added to the set of derivative motives that have been outlined earlier in this section.

### III

In addition to the question of motives, there is the technique that Procopius employed in his account of the Arabs, both federate and Peninsular, and his presentation of their image. This was found to be a complex one consisting first of a series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* that was tripartite in structure, according to which Procopius would present a Byzantine defeat or an unsatisfactory operation such as Callinicum or the Assyrian campaign of 541 and then would suppress all antecedent and subsequent events that shed credit on a Ghassānid such as Arethas.<sup>149</sup> In addition to the tripartite structure of the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, this technique was found to involve three attendant devices: rhetorical speeches, ethnographic digressions, and strident contrasts.<sup>150</sup> The reexamination of the history of the two federates, Ghassān and Kinda, during the reign of Justinian undertaken in this volume has only confirmed the validity of the previous conclusions on Procopius' technique and has provided more support for the validity of these conclusions.

This reexamination has also confirmed what was said in the earlier studies on Procopius' attitude toward Justinian, namely, his *Kaiserkritik*. Three features of this *Kaiserkritik* may be restated, especially as they involve Procopius' image of the Arabs in light of this reexamination. (1) Contrast with other emperors and even with Chosroes: Justin and Justinian are contrasted and weighed in the same scale as Anastasius and are found wanting.<sup>151</sup> In addition to a contrast with Anastasius, there is the contrast with Chosroes, who manfully takes the field throughout the campaigns of the second Persian war, while Justinian hibernates in Constantinople.<sup>152</sup> (2) The emperor also comes in for criticism through the officers he employs to implement his policy that involves the Arabs. Procopius is cool toward the brothers Summus and Julian, especially to the former.<sup>153</sup> His coolness toward the house of Nonnosus is even more remarkable in view of their signal services to Byzantium. He

<sup>148</sup> As pointed out by Tinnefeld in *Kategorien*, where elements other than ideological are explored and listed.

<sup>149</sup> Or a Kindite, such as Qays, to whom he applied the same technique in an attempt to denigrate him.

<sup>150</sup> See "Procopius and Arethas," 380-81, sec. 1.

<sup>151</sup> See "Procopius and Kinda," 77-78, and above, 22-24, on Procopius and the Arabs in the reign of Anastasius.

<sup>152</sup> See above, 232-34.

<sup>153</sup> See above, 185-93.

obliterates them completely from his *History*. (3) Finally, there is that feature of his technique involving women, to whom he was not sympathetic in general. He defames both Theodora and Antonina<sup>154</sup> in order to cast aspersions on Justinian and Belisarius respectively, and in so doing he indulges not only in *Kaiserkritik* but also in what might be termed *Magisterkritik* against the former *magister militum* in Oriens, to whom he was appointed *symbolos*.

## IV

Perhaps the discussion of the theme "Procopius and the Arabs" in the foregoing pages has shed more light on Procopius and the series of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* in his account, on his motives, and on his technique. Yet a few more reflections may be made on this inexhaustible topic—the enigma that was Procopius.

## A

Perhaps the best commentary on his mendacity as far as Arethas and the Ghassānids are concerned is the longevity and durability of Arethas in the service of Byzantium and the *autokrator*. If Arethas had been treacherous as well as incompetent, Byzantium would have rid itself of him quite early, after Callinicum in 531 when Procopius leveled against him the monstrous charge of *prodosia*. Arethas remained the faithful servant and vassal of Justinian for some forty years, and toward the end of Justinian's reign he paid a visit to the capital, and, what is more, as *patricius*, evidence that the emperor had reposed complete trust in him. Yet if Procopius failed to do the phylarch any harm during his lifetime, he succeeded in inflicting some harm on him posthumously.

1. Procopius is the creator of the dark image of the Arabs which has dominated Byzantine historiography after him. This is necessary to point out, considering that in the preceding fifth century Byzantine historiography was favorable to the Arabs.<sup>155</sup> It was Procopius who changed their image.

2. The influence of Procopius on sixth-century Byzantine historiography was far-reaching. The four chroniclers who wrote in the second half of the century were his continuators and inherited his image of the Arabs, especially the *prodosia* theme. The silence of Agathias<sup>156</sup> has been commented upon, while Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact are not so silent. The *prodosia* charge was leveled against Arethas' son and successor, Mundir, who thus appears in Byzantine historiography as a traitor, and son of a traitor,<sup>157</sup> as does

<sup>154</sup> For this see Elizabeth A. Fisher, "Theodora and Antonina in the *Historia Arcana*: History and/or Fiction," *Arethusa* 11 (1978), 253–79; Cameron, *Procopius*, 72–75.

<sup>155</sup> On this see *BAFIC*, 532–36.

<sup>156</sup> On this see above, 255–58.

<sup>157</sup> On all this see below, 439–55.

his son Nu'mān. The "school of Procopius" made *prodosia* hereditary in the Ghassānid royal house.

3. While Arethas survived the calumnies of Procopius and remained in his office for some forty years, his son Munḍir did not fare so well. Only a few years after his accession, he had a brush with Justin II and decided to withdraw from the service; after the reconciliation he was haunted by the charge of *prodosia* and was exiled to Sicily, only some ten years after his accession. The immediate cause of his downfall was imperial displeasure and friction with Maurice, but it remains to be shown to what extent the image that Procopius had projected influenced imperial hostility toward Munḍir.

## B

In spite of the fact that he wrote *cum ira et studio*, Procopius remains the chief historian of the long and famous reign. This discussion has thus contributed to a better understanding of Procopian historiography and through this arrived at a better perception of Byzantine history during the reign of Justinian. As far as Byzantine history is concerned, it is now possible, after various tests have been applied to his veracity, to revise the historiography of the wars of Justinian in the East in view of the important role that the Arabs played in them. Perhaps even more important is the reevaluation and the consequent rehabilitation of the Arab and Arabian policy of Justinian, as contribution not only to a better understanding of the political, military, and economic history of the reign but also to the study of the watershed that the seventh century was to become because of the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests.

As far as Procopian historiography is concerned, this discussion of the theme "Procopius and the Arabs" has, among other things, identified a new area of *Kaiserkritik* that involves the federate Arabs. It has also uncovered his motives and described his peculiar technique. Furthermore, it has shown that the last event mentioned in the *History* can be dated to June 554, the year of the death of the Lakhmid king, Munḍir, in Chalcidicē and that the *History*, or that portion of it to which the statement on Munḍir's death belongs, must have been written *after* that date.<sup>158</sup> Despite his prejudices and antipathies, Procopius remains indispensable as a source on the federate Arabs of the sixth century, just as he is on other sectors of the barbarian world such as the Germans, unsympathetic to that world as he was.

<sup>158</sup> On Munḍir's death, see above, 298 note 123.

## IV

### The Reign of Justin II (565–578)

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The reign of Justin II opens a new period in the history of the sixth century, that of the successors of Justinian, during which the Arab-Byzantine relationship underwent serious changes. While the Ghassānids had enjoyed a peaceful coexistence with Justinian on whose pro-Arab and pro-Ghassānid policy they could count for the thirty-seven years of his reign, they now had to deal with three different emperors of the house of Justin—Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice—each of whom had his own foreign policy and attitude toward his federates, including the Ghassānids. This had far-reaching consequences on the course of Byzantine as well as Arab history, spilling over to the seventh century with its historic cataclysms.

The reign of Justin II is divisible into two periods: 565–574, when he was sole ruler, and 575–578, when Tiberius was co-ruler with him. But as far as Ghassānid-Byzantine relations are concerned, the periodization is different: the first period ran for four years, which coincided with the last four years of Arethas' reign; the second period started with the accession of Munḍir in 569, which witnessed the souring of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. The first half of this chapter deals with the first period, when Arethas was still the king of the Ghassānids, the dominant figure in Arab-Byzantine relations.

After his visit to Constantinople in 563, Arethas lived another six years, until his death in 569. Two of these years coincided with the last two of Justinian's reign, while the remaining years coincided with the first four of Justin II's. The Ghassānid king apparently lost none of his vigor and remained active until the very end, as the Arabic and Syriac sources testify. But the Greek sources are silent on him after his last visit to the capital, with the exception of an implicit reference that involves his son Munḍir, whom he had appointed his successor in 563. The Greek sources, represented by Menander, speak now of the Lakhmids in the context of Byzantine-Persian diplomacy, but finally the Ghassānids are involved in the account. Menander is the only source for this short period; he is relatively expansive on the Lakhmids, but

laconic on the Ghassānids, and he includes a very short ethnographic digression on the Saracens.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE LAKHMIDS

References to the Lakhmids in Menander turn largely round the subsidies which, according to the Lakhmids, were paid them by Justinian and which they wanted continued by Justin II. Negotiations went through two phases: the first witnessed a dialogue in Ctesiphon between Chosroes and the Byzantine envoy, John, son of Domentiolus, concerning these subsidies; while the second unfolded in Constantinople between Justin II and Mebod, the envoy who headed the Persian embassy.

### A

After his accession, Justin sent John, son of Domentiolus, to the Persian court to announce his accession.<sup>2</sup> John arrived in Ctesiphon in July 567, and there Chosroes broached the topic of the Byzantine subsidies to the Lakhmids. But before he gave an account of the dialogue between Chosroes and John, Menander gave its background from the Byzantine viewpoint, and specifically from that of Justin II who had decided to deny the Lakhmids these subsidies. According to him, it was only Justinian's generosity that could explain these subsidies to the Lakhmids which were extended as gifts in times of peace, while the new emperor, Justin, was of a different temperament and decided to discontinue them. Menander concludes by saying that the Persian Saracens (the Lakhmids) "regarded this as a stoppage of their income and urged the Persian king not to overlook those who depended upon him."

Chosroes' main argument was that "the Saracens claimed that they received the money to keep the peace and not attack the Roman empire, and they insisted that this was the truth of the matter." John rejected this claim and maintained that although it is true that "the Saracens were accustomed to receive gifts from the emperor Justinian, the practice was established out of the free wish of the giver . . . (Justinian thus) created a new situation by the excess of his generosity, but he did not act under compulsion . . . nor did he create a series of obligations. My clearest proof that the Saracens received this money as a gift and not as they claim under agreement, is that they sent gifts

<sup>1</sup> For recent scholarship on Menander, see B. Baldwin, "Menander Protector," *DOP* 32 (1978), 100–125 with bibliography; R. C. Blockley, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985), esp. 1–30. All references to Menander in this chapter are to this edition. His account of the Arabs, especially the Lakhmids, may be found on pp. 96–110.

<sup>2</sup> One would think that this happened shortly after the accession of Justin in 565, but with the help of Theophanes of Byzantium and the internal evidence of the Menander fragment on the festival *Fruvdigan*, it is possible to date the embassy accurately to July 567; see Blockley, *Menander*, 261 note 99; but cf. Baldwin, "Menander," 118.

in return to the Emperor. No one denies this, I think."<sup>3</sup> John's was a spirited speech, and it apparently convinced Chosroes to drop the subject of the Lakhmid subsidies.

The interest of this fairly detailed account is that it throws more light on the question of these Byzantine subsidies, raised before and after the negotiations that led to the Peace of 561.<sup>4</sup> Especially relevant is a further statement by John, almost an admission of the fact: "And even if we grant that Justinian gave them the money under treaty, the donation ran for the lifetime of the Emperor who gave it and expired at his death. For no state will ever be bound by the practice of one man (I refer to his excess of generosity) or by an agreement that brings no benefit, even if the man who established the practice or made the agreement is a king."<sup>5</sup> In so saying, John seems to be conceding more than Peter did when he spoke to Chosroes in 561.<sup>6</sup>

## B

Menander's account of the second phase is equally informative on Byzantine-Lakhmid relations. After the conclusion of the talks with John in Ctesiphon, Chosroes sent an embassy under Mebod to Constantinople to discuss Suania, and with him also journeyed a Lakhmid embassy of forty members to discuss the question of subsidies. Justin had been annoyed with John who, he thought, had exceeded his instructions. In Menander's own words, "it had not been part of his brief either that he should urge the Suani to submit to the Romans or that an envoy should come to Byzantium on this matter."<sup>7</sup> So when the Persian embassy arrived in Constantinople, it found the emperor in a surly mood and he would not even discuss Suania. Thus Justin's dialogue with Mebod concentrated on the Lakhmids and the question of their subsidies. This is a gain for the student of Byzantine-Lakhmid relations, since the account includes valuable data, not the least important being those on Justin's perception of the Arabs<sup>8</sup> and indirectly Menander's.

1. Having failed to get Justin to discuss Suania, Mebod tries to get the Lakhmids to talk to Justin about the subsidies lest he should return completely empty-handed. Justin gave permission to the Lakhmid envoy alone to approach him "for he knew that the envoy out of pride would refuse to approach the emperor without his followers, but just as when the Saracen envoys

<sup>3</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 101. The subsidy amounted to a hundred pounds of gold, as is clear from Menander's account of the negotiations for the Peace of 561; see *ibid.*, p. 68, line 291.

<sup>4</sup> On this see above, 266–75.

<sup>5</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 255 note 46.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>8</sup> And on his future relations with the Ghassānid Mundir in the 570s, which proved to be disastrous for Byzantium; see below, 346–56.



had come before Justinian with all their companions, he would wish to do the same and maintain the custom."<sup>9</sup> This was considered a slight by the Saracen envoy, and so he declined to have the audience with the emperor, which led to an altercation between Mebod and Justin, in which the former tried to be fair to the Saracens while the latter accused Mebod of acting not so much as an ambassador but as a judge. Mebod then saluted the emperor and withdrew. Thus ended the first stage of the negotiations.

The account calls for the following comments. (a) The first striking feature of the whole transaction is the number of the Lakhmid delegation—no less than forty!<sup>10</sup> This is a reflection of the rising importance of the Lakhmids to both the Persians and the Byzantines. (b) The passage quoted above makes it amply clear that Justinian not only extended subsidies to the Lakhmids but received in Constantinople Lakhmid embassies from 'Amr's<sup>11</sup> father, Mundir. It further suggests that Justinian used to receive the delegation in its entirety. (c) The great desire of the Lakhmids to receive the *centenarium* of gold they claimed had been paid them as a subsidy by Justinian is noteworthy, and so is the anxiety of the Persians that their Arab vassals should succeed in receiving it from Byzantium—apparently a sensitive issue in Persian-Lakhmid relations. The recently published Arabic medieval work, *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya*, which has shed so much light on pre-Islamic Arab history, has information that fully explains the Lakhmid desire for gold recorded by Menander. The author divides the income of the Lakhmid kings into five categories:<sup>12</sup> fiefs, trade, *ghazw* (raids in Arabia), raiding expeditions into Byzantine territory, and taxes from tribes subservient to them. It is clear from his account that their income was mostly livestock; hence their desire to have money, Byzantine gold, the *solidi* of which had great prestige among the Arabs of pre-Islamic times, and which even found expression in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry of the period.

2. The second stage in these negotiations opens when Mebod returns to the palace a few days later and insists on the admission of the Saracens to the

<sup>9</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 107.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106, line 45. The orthography of the name of the Lakhmid king, 'Amr, appears curiously enough in Menander as Ἀμβροσος, with the addition not only of the final customary *sigma* but also another consonant, the *beta*. Why Menander and Theophanes chose this orthography (which brings the name so close to that of the bishop of Milan!) is not clear.

<sup>12</sup> M. J. Kister, who was the first to draw attention to this work while it was still in manuscript form, has conveniently summarized the account on the income of the Lakhmids in "Al-Ḥira: Some Notes on Its Relations with Arabia," *Arabica* 15 (1968), 159. It is also doubtful that the Lakhmids received any of the silver coins of the Sasanids for subsidies, as the Ghassānids received their *annona* from Byzantium, who apparently were more prosperous than the Lakhmids in this respect. This is even reflected in *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya*, for which see *ibid.*, p. 525.

royal presence. This time he supported his request by appealing to precedents during the reign of Justinian, when the Saracens came with his predecessor, the Zikh, and so asked that he be given the same privilege as he had. This argument was rejected by Justin, and, after some unpleasantness between the two, they joined hands in invoking curses upon the Saracens. Finally, Justin dismissed both the Persian and the Saracen envoys. Thus ended in a most unsatisfactory manner the second stage of the negotiations, concerning the subsidies to the Lakhmids.<sup>13</sup>

This second stage calls for the following comments. The reference to an interpreter (ἑρμηνεύς)<sup>14</sup> during the account of the altercation between Justin and Mebod argues, of course, that there must have been an interpreter for translating not only from Persian but also from the Arabic of the Lakhmid envoy. The envoy most probably could speak Persian, but he would have avoided making the mistake of doing so. He wanted to emphasize the Lakhmid identity and separateness from the Persians lest the Lakhmid request be confused with that of the latter; this was already reflected in the large number of Lakhmid delegates.

It is a pity that Menander does not give the name of the Lakhmid envoy, as he does the Persian. In all probability he was a member of the house of Ayyūb, the talented Christian family in the service of the Lakhmids.<sup>15</sup> Noteworthy is Justin's description of the Lakhmid envoy as a "turncoat and a huckster" (μεταβολεὺς καὶ παλίγκοτος).<sup>16</sup> Justin was clearly trying to undermine the loyalty of the Lakhmid vassal of Persia by presenting him as a turncoat who was negotiating with another power, Byzantium. The charge recalls that made by Chosroes against Justinian—that he tried to win over Mundir—during the negotiations concerning the *Strata* dispute.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, the account brings out clearly Justin's attitude toward the barbarians and especially the question of paying them subsidies and his determination to stop this practice. Justin's outburst is directed not just against the Lakhmids but also the Saracens as a people or a race.<sup>18</sup> This is a matter of some importance as it is relevant to the discussion of the souring of relations between him and his own vassal client-king, the Ghassānid Mundir, in the

<sup>13</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 108–11.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108, line 90. See also below, 552–53, for the occurrence of the term in Theophylact. Surely the office of the *magister officiorum* (or the *scrinium barbarorum*, if it existed then) must have had interpreters for making intelligible what these foreign ambassadors who spoke in their own languages had to say.

<sup>15</sup> On the house of Ayyūb, see below, 315–18.

<sup>16</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, p. 110, line 102.

<sup>17</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.12–13.

<sup>18</sup> "It would be laughable if we, the Romans, became tributary to the Saracen race, nomads at that"; Blockley, *Menander*, 111.

570s. The denial of the subsidies to the Lakhmids no doubt pleased the Ghassānids, who could not have been thrilled by the gifts of Byzantine gold to their inveterate adversaries the Lakhmids, for fighting whom they were paid the *annona*.

### III. THE GHASSĀNIDS

The Byzantine-Lakhmid quarrel developed into a Lakhmid-Ghassānid one.

Thus the embassy was concluded and the emperor sent the Persian envoy and the Saracens together back home to their countries. . . . But when the Saracens reached their own land and reported to Ambrus the attitude (βουλή) of the Emperor towards the Saracens who were subject to the Medes, then Ambrus ordered his brother Kaboses (Ḳābūs), who lay opposite Alamundar (Mundir), the leader of the Saracens, subject to the Romans, to ravage Alamundar's territory. This territory was on the borders of Arabia.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of its brevity, this passage from Menander includes facts that are both startling and valuable for the study of Ghassānid and Ghassānid-Lakhmid relations in the early years of Justin's reign. It was the Byzantine emperor who insulted the Lakhmid delegation and not the Ghassānids, and yet the Lakhmids demonstrate their chagrin at this treatment by attacking Ghassānid territory, in violation of one of the articles of the treaty of 561. This, together with the precious reference to the Ghassānid Mundir (Almundar), calls for the following comments.

1. It was extraordinary that the Lakhmid vassal of Persia, 'Amr, should have asked his brother Ḳābūs to attack Ghassānid territory. But in the context of the failure of the negotiations and Justin's extremely insulting treatment of both the Persian and the Lakhmid embassies, it is not perhaps an entirely extraordinary reaction since frustration can explain it. The Lakhmid ruler, convinced of the justice of his claim, and hurt by the treatment, felt he could vent it by some military action; his overlord, the Persian king, would have turned a blind eye to this disorderly conduct, because he too was angered by Justin's arrogance. Noteworthy is the fact that the Lakhmids do not attack Byzantine territory, which would have been an intolerable breach of the peace treaty of 561, but Ghassānid territory which, as will be presently argued, was *extra limitem*.

More important than the Lakhmid military action are the references to the Ghassānids in the Menander passage. By themselves, and by bringing them into relation with the passage in Theophanes on the Ghassānid visit to

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. For the Lakhmids 'Amr and Ḳābūs, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 94-102 and 102-5, esp. 99, on the special role of Ḳābūs during the reign of his brother. On the name Ḳābūs, deriving from a name in old Persian epic, see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 345 note 4.

Constantinople in 563, much light is shed on Ghassānid history in the last years of Arethas' reign. Theophanes and Menander are mutually illuminating.

2. In 563 Arethas discussed with Justinian the question of the succession to the phylarchate after his death, but Theophanes does not say which of his children was chosen. The succession of Mundīr in 569 implies that it was he, but the fragment from Menander withdraws the date to 567 and clearly indicates that it was Mundīr who was designated successor in 563.

3. The Menander passage suggests that Mundīr was in charge of an outlying district to defend, not within the provincial cadre of Oriens, but most probably territory outside the *limes*.<sup>20</sup> This appointment to such a territory becomes intelligible when it is remembered that Arethas complained in 563 that the Lakhmid ʿAmr was attacking *his* territory. This, then, is the background for the appointment of Mundīr, a frontiersman to watch the movement of the Lakhmids against the Ghassānids.

4. This appointment of Mundīr to the frontier command shortly after 563 is the background for the appointment of Ḳābūs by his brother ʿAmr, as a counterpoise to Mundīr and his command.<sup>21</sup> Thus there was a certain responsiveness that obtained in Lakhmid-Ghassānid relations. And the parallelism that also obtained may be further developed by pointing out that Mundīr and Ḳābūs were not only counterparts as guardians of the Ghassānid and Lakhmid frontiers respectively, but also in their being designated successors to their respective relatives, Arethas and ʿAmr, and both started to reign in the same year, when the two rulers died in 569.

5. Nothing is known about Ḳābūs' campaign against the territory of Mundīr, but it is not likely to have been a serious breach of the treaty of 561. Mundīr's response is also unknown. It is also likely to have been defensive and most probably simply contained the Lakhmid thrust. Mundīr, an aggressive field commander, would not have dared to overreact, as he was to do in 570. He was still subordinate to his father's will, who clearly interpreted correctly the imperial mood during the last years of Justinian, who wanted peace to prevail on the eastern frontier.<sup>22</sup>

6. The reference in the passage to ἡ Ἰλαμουνδάρου γῆ, "the territory of Mundīr," is striking and noteworthy. It raises some important questions, the first of which is its location. Menander merely says it was on the border of Arabia: ἦδε δὲ ἡ γῆ ὑπὸ Ἀραβίαν τελεῖ. But it is not clear what is meant

<sup>20</sup> Perhaps Mundīr's was a new command called into being by the new aggressive policy of the Lakhmids.

<sup>21</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, p. 110, lines 120–23. I prefer to translate ἀντικαθιστάμενος not as "lay opposite" but as "set up, established opposite or against."

<sup>22</sup> This encounter involving Mundīr and Ḳābūs in 567 must not be confused with that of 570. German Orientalism had solved this problem a long time ago, and Rothstein rightly followed Nöldeke's reasoning, adding something of his own; see Rothstein, *DLH*, 98–99.

by "Arabia," the Peninsula or the Provincia. If the latter, the reference would be more specific, but there is no way of telling which of the two Arabias Menander had in mind. So this "Ghassānid territory" could have been anywhere east of the *limes* from the Euphrates to Ayla. In the southern sector, bordering on the Provincia Arabia, this territory could have been in northern Ḥijāz or in the region of Wādī Sirḥān. In the former there was Phoinikōn and a region where the Azd tribal group had a strong presence including Yathrib; in the latter there was the tribe of Kalb, *foederati* of Byzantium in the Outer Shield. On the other hand this territory could have been in the northern sector, where the Ghassānids seem to have had a presence, as is apparent from an analysis of Procopius' account of the *Strata* dispute. Moreover, the fact that Munḍir and Ḳābūs were chosen to watch each other suggests that Munḍir was stationed in a location not far from the Persian-Lakhmid border in the north, rather than in the south of Oriens. Where exactly this "Ghassānid territory" was located is not clear, but it was real and it certainly existed.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps it was thither that Munḍir in the 570s retreated after his quarrel with Justin II, when he left the service of Byzantium for some time.

7. For the Ghassānid Munḍir, the Menander passage gives important data on his background before he succeeded to the Ghassānid phylarchate and *Basileia* in 569. Although he must have been a phylarch before 563, it was then that he was appointed successor to Arethas and so, before his accession in 569, he had been for six years the "crown prince" and in command of the "Ghassānid territory" *extra limitem*, a kind of warden of the Ghassānid March. These were years of preparation for him during which he must have acquired a firsthand knowledge of the military geography of the region, the battleground between the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids. As long as his redoubtable father was alive, he could only follow his lead in pursuing a policy of peaceful coexistence with the Lakhmids, but as soon as his father died and he was responsible only for himself, he changed his strategy, as will be discussed below.

8. The fragments from Menander that discuss the Lakhmid-Byzantine relations open with Justin's dispatch of John, son of Domentiolus, in order that he may announce the accession of Justin. This raises the question whether Arethas had to renew the *foedus* with Byzantium on the death of Justinian and also whether, on his own death in 569, Byzantium had to renew the *foedus* with his successor, Munḍir.<sup>24</sup> The chances are that the *foedus* had to be renewed on both occasions.

<sup>23</sup> John of Ephesus (below, note 125) speaks of the "land of the house of Arethas," which probably can be identified with the reference in Menander. The pre-Islamic Arab *ḥimā*, "protected land," comes to mind, for which see *El*<sup>2</sup>, III, s.v.

<sup>24</sup> Relevant in this connection is what John, son of Domentiolus, says on the subsidies

## IV. THE HOUSE OF AYYŪB

References in Menander to a Lakhmid embassy in Constantinople in the reign of Justin II and implied ones to others in the reign of Justinian raise the question of whether there was a family of Arab diplomats in the service of the Lakhmids and the Persians, not unlike that of the house of Nonnosus in the service of Byzantium. A valuable chapter in one of the main sources for the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, namely, *al-Aghānī*, on the Hīran poet ʿAdī ibn-Zayd, confirms this supposition. The *Aghānī* is a reliable source for the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, and its account has inherent trustworthiness. Furthermore, it can be interlocked with incontestable, reliable Greek sources, such as the *History* of Menander and the *Martyrium Arethae*. This confrontation of the Arabic and the Greek sources will yield the conclusion that there was such a family of diplomats in the service of the Lakhmids and that, as a result, embassies could have been sent to Justinian by the Lakhmids, alluded to obliquely by Procopius.

The *Aghānī* gives a short account<sup>25</sup> of the "Sons of Ayyūb" (Banū Ayyūb) or "The House of Ayyūb," who according to it flourished in the second half of the fifth century and in the sixth. *Aghānī* enumerates five descendants of the eponym, Ayyūb, who are sixth-century figures. The most distinguished and relevant to this discussion are the following: (1) Ḥammād,<sup>26</sup> who was the first to become literate; he distinguished himself so much in this respect that he became the *kātib*, the chancery secretary of the Lakhmid king, Nuʿmān (most probably the one who ruled ca. 500); (2) his son, Zayd,<sup>27</sup> who was the first in the family to become bilingual and master of both Persian and Arabic; he also so distinguished himself that the Persian king put him in charge of the official post, the *barīd* (Latin: *veredi*); (3) the third, Zayd's son, ʿAdī, who was even more distinguished than his father and grandfather; ʿAdī was poet, orator, interpreter, and translator, and served as Persian ambassador to Constantinople in the last quarter of the sixth century; finally, he was employed at the

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that "the donation ran for the lifetime of the Emperor who gave it and expired at his death"; see Blockley, *Menander*, p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> See A. Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1971), II, 80–85 on the house of Ayyūb. For the later fortunes of the house, involving the murder of the poet ʿAdī, that of the Lakhmid king Nuʿmān, and the events that led to the famous battle of Du-Qār, see 85–129. For the phrase "Banū-Ayyūb," "The sons of Ayyūb," as a description of the family, see *ibid.*, 82. For a translation of the account of *Aghānī* on "Banū Ayyūb," see J. Horovitz, "ʿAdī ibn-Zayd, the Poet of Hīra," *Islamic Culture* 4 (1930), 32–40. Horovitz translated the entire account of *Aghānī* into German, and M. Pickthall turned it into English, the version published in *Islamic Culture*. For the translation with notes, see *ibid.*, 31–69. It is especially useful as Nöldeke translated only the shorter account of Ṭabarī in *PAS*.

<sup>26</sup> *Aghānī*, II, 82.

<sup>27</sup> For Zayd, see *ibid.*, 82–83.



Persian chancery in Ctesiphon, where he was in charge of the "bureau of Arab affairs."<sup>28</sup> These Ayyūbids were influential in both Sasanid and Lakhmid circles in Ctesiphon and Ḥīra, respectively. In addition to their affluence and political influence, they were also a distinguished Christian family in Ḥīra, perhaps the most distinguished, and the fact is reflected from the beginning of their emigration to Ḥīra from northeastern Arabia. Their eponym had the name Ayyūb (Job), which can only be a Christian name and must document the Christianity of its bearer.<sup>29</sup>

If the Lakhmids wanted to employ the services of some of their subjects as diplomats, especially for their relations with Byzantium, the "Sons of Ayyūb" would have been the natural choice. They had the full confidence of the Lakhmids before relations soured around the year 600 through professional jealousies, and some of them were bilingual in Arabic and Persian. Finally, they were Christians,<sup>30</sup> a matter of considerable importance, especially when the Lakhmids and the Persians were dealing with the Christian Roman Empire.<sup>31</sup> Confirmation of this conclusion on the employment of members of this family for diplomatic missions may be available in the *Martyrium Arethae*. One of its chapters describes the conference of Ramla around 520 and enumerates the diplomats on the Lakhmid side and those on the Byzantine. One of these was a certain Zayd, son of Ayyūb. And it has been argued that this was definitely a member of this very same house of Ayyūb, most probably the son of Ḥammād, and the father of ʿAdī, the most famous member of the family.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 83–85.

<sup>29</sup> As understood by Nöldeke, *PAS*, 312 note 5. This note has the usual valuable remarks of Nöldeke on the Arabic sources. He was the first to spot Ayyūb in the 'Ióβ of the "Martyrium Arethae," *ibid.* In addition to Nöldeke's note on the house of Ayyūb, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 109 note 1. On the problematical dates of Ayyūb, see Horovitz, "ʿAdī ibn-Zayd," 33–34. For the bureau of Arab affairs in the Persian chancery, see M. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984), 65–66.

<sup>30</sup> The family belonged to the tribe of Tamīm, one of the Arab tribes of northeastern Arabia, among whom Christianity was propagated. Tamīm lived in Yamāma, the capital of which was Hajar, in the Diocese of Bēth Qaṣrāyē; see Horovitz, "ʿAdī ibn-Zayd," 33 note 1; for Hajar, Yamāma, and its bishops, see M. Fiey, "Diocèses syriens orientaux du golfe persique," in *idem, Communautés syriaques* (London, 1979), study no. 2, pp. 317–18. The Christianity of the family must have been enhanced with Ayyūb's emigration to Ḥīra, the great Christian center. His grandson Ḥammād married someone from the Christian tribe of Tāy; *Agbānī*, II, 82. The family remained Christian until late Islamic times, a sure sign of its devotion to its faith; see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 331 note 2; Horovitz, *op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> On the employment of Christian ecclesiastics by the Sasanids for running diplomatic errands for them with Byzantium, see N. Garsoïan, "Le rôle de l'hierarchie chrétienne dans les rapports diplomatiques entre Byzance et les Sassanides," *Revue des études arméniennes*, n.s. 10 (1973), 119–38; and S. Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis and Persian Christianity in the Fifth Century*, CSCO 426, Subsidia 63 (Louvain, 1981), 35.

<sup>32</sup> On the conference see the present writer in "Byzantino-arabica: The Conference of

The conference of Ramla is extremely important for making further probings into the history of the house of Ayyūb and its emergence as the diplomatists of the Lakhmids in the sixth century. At that conference, which was held in Munḍir's territory at Ramla, the Lakhmid king must have noted that Abraham, the chief Byzantine envoy, was a member of a family of diplomats in the service of Byzantium, since his father,<sup>33</sup> Euphrasius, had concluded the treaty with Munḍir's father-in-law, the Kindite Arethas, in 502. Abraham was most probably a Semite,<sup>34</sup> and Arabic-speaking, possibly an Arab. Byzantium's employment of Arabs or Semites as diplomatists to run errands for them with the Lakhmids could have inspired Munḍir to do the same and employ Arabs to run diplomatic errands for him. In this capacity, members of the house of Ayyūb, as has been explained, were available and highly qualified.

The Ramla conference is also relevant in another way. Personal contact with Munḍir and the Lakhmid delegation would have given Abraham, the Byzantine envoy, an intimate glimpse of the Lakhmids and of the place of Christianity in Ḥīra and at their court. He would have reported to Justinian that Munḍir's wife was a Christian lady, the daughter of his own Kindite federate, Arethas, that the "son of Ayyūb" who was present at Ramla was also a Christian, that a Christian chief in the army of Munḍir almost threatened insubordination if Munḍir dared to indulge in barbarities against the Christians,<sup>35</sup> and that Ḥīra, in spite of the paganism of its Lakhmid rulers, was a great Christian Arab center. This is the most plausible explanation for the statements in the Greek sources about embassies exchanged between Justinian and the Lakhmids. Justinian could conclude that in the Lakhmid realm there was a strong Christian element not unreceptive to Christian Byzantium.<sup>36</sup> The dispatch of members of the Christian house of Ayyūb could only have con-

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Ramla, A.D. 524," *JNES* 23 (1964), 115–31. On Zayd, son of Ayyūb, see 118–19, where Zayd appears as a participant at the conference on the Lakhmid side.

<sup>33</sup> And as his son Nonnosus was also to go on an embassy to Qays, the chief of Kinda.

<sup>34</sup> Bury is specific and calls him a Saracen; *HLRE*, II, 326 note 2.

<sup>35</sup> On this, see "Conference of Ramla," 119 note 19. In this note Zayd ibn-Ayyūb was tentatively identified with this Christian chief, and an alternative identification was also suggested.

<sup>36</sup> The Sasanids could suspect that the Christians in their realm, especially those who were not Nestorians, were a fifth column for Byzantium, the Christian Roman Empire, or at least that the latter's sympathies were with Byzantium; for some evidence of this, see M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian* (Oxford, 1988), 214. Two cases of Nestorian sympathies with Sasanid Persia against Christian Byzantium have been noted: those of Bar-Šauma of Nisibis and Isho'yahb of Arzun; see Gero, *Barsauma of Nisibis*, 36. Whether one can generalize on the basis of two cases is not clear. Perhaps the Nestorians, in spite of their doctrinal differences with Chalcedonian Byzantium, felt the same way as the Monophysites and "preferred the rule of Roman heretics to that of Persian heathens"; Whitby, loc. cit.

firmed Justinian in this conclusion. This is the most plausible explanation for the references in the sources to embassies that were exchanged between the Lakhmids and the Byzantines during the reign of Justinian, especially those in Procopius when he was giving an account of the *Strata* dispute. He recounts that, during the negotiations that attended that dispute, Chosroes accused Justinian of having "attempted in time of peace to attach Alamoundaras to himself" and that Summus, the Roman negotiator, "had hoodwinked him by promises of large sums of money on condition that he should join the Romans."<sup>37</sup> Such accusations do not sound entirely unfounded in light of what has just been said of the family of Christian diplomats in the service of Persia, Banū Ayyūb.

It remains to discuss the identity of the Lakhmid ambassador to Constantinople in 567 as recorded by Menander. As he was, according to the foregoing paragraph, a member of the house of Ayyūb, he could have been ʿAdī, whose *floruit* is usually assigned to the last quarter of the sixth century, especially during the reign of the Lakhmid Nuʿmān, who ruled for some twenty years and died ca. 604. The year 567 is some fifteen years before the reign of Nuʿmān, but it is not impossible that ʿAdī was dispatched as ambassador at an early age.<sup>38</sup> His father, Zayd, had already taken part in the conference of Ramla around 520, and it is unlikely that he was alive or active in 567.

If the identity of the Lakhmid ambassador remains unclear for this embassy, it can at least be said that he was a member of the house of Ayyūb and was possibly ʿAdī.<sup>39</sup> But for the embassy mentioned in the Arabic source, *Aghānī*, there is no problem of identification since it is explicitly stated that it was ʿAdī who was the ambassador, and this must be assigned to a later date that falls within the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>40</sup>

#### V. JUSTIN II'S DAUGHTER, ᾿Αραβία

The name of Justin II's daughter is striking and can only be the noun, ᾿Αραβία, or the adjective, ᾿Αραβία. This is unique in the Byzantine onomasticon, especially the imperial one, and at a time when the Arab image was

<sup>37</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.i.12–13.

<sup>38</sup> Ca. 550 is given as the birthdate of ʿAdī, in Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 178; so he would have been some twenty years old.

<sup>39</sup> The chronology of the house of Ayyūb is attended with uncertainty, as is the sequence of descendants. In "Conference of Ramla," 118–19 it was suggested that the Ayyūbid participant at the conference, Zayd, was a grandfather of ʿAdī, but his grandfather according to *Aghānī* was Ḥammād. Without inscriptions or some other contemporary document, it is difficult to settle such a question definitively. See also Nöldeke, *PAS*, 312 note 5.

<sup>40</sup> In view of this, the discussion of this embassy is postponed to a later reign; see below, 478–82.

so blurred and unattractive, haunted as it was by charges of treachery and heresy.<sup>41</sup> It even attracted the attention of Corippus, the panegyrist of her father, who noted the difference in name and age between her and her mother Sophia: "nomen distabat et aetas."<sup>42</sup> Consequently, the naming of one of the princesses of the royal house, Arabia, could possibly have some historical significance, a reflection of a pro-Arab attitude at the imperial court in Constantinople sometime in the sixth century. In view of the souring of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Justin II and the disastrous consequences,<sup>43</sup> it is worth exploring this possibility.

1. Arabia's age is an important pointer. Fortunately Corippus refers to the fact that when the *cura palatii* was rendered vacant by the accession of Justin, the emperor appointed Baduarius to be *curopalates* as his successor in that office.<sup>44</sup> This was the husband of Arabia, and so it is established that she was a married woman on 14 November 565 when her father was crowned emperor on the same day that Justinian died.<sup>45</sup> She must have been at least twenty when she was married, thus her marriage would have taken place in the mid-540s, if not earlier, if she was slightly older than twenty in 565.

2. But in the mid-540s Theodora was still alive—her great-aunt and the pro-Arab/pro-Ghassānid empress. Theodora was the Monophysite empress who, until she died in 548, had consistently and systematically supported the Monophysite church in the Orient. Now the mailed fist of this church was none other than the Ghassānid phylarch of Arabia, Arethas, son of Jabala, who throughout his career of forty years almost rivaled the empress in his devotion to the Monophysite cause in word and deed. What is most relevant in this context is that around 540 he made his famous journey to Constantinople, conferred with the empress, and brought about the resuscitation of the Monophysite hierarchy, almost decimated by depositions and persecutions during the reign of Justin I and Justinian.<sup>46</sup> It is, therefore, quite likely that the grateful empress reflected her appreciation for the contributions of the

<sup>41</sup> Theodosius' wife, Athenais, had to change her name to Eudocia, and Tiberius II's wife, Ino, became Anastasia. If pagan names were not tolerated for the imperial family in the Christian empire, "barbarian" names must also have been objectionable.

<sup>42</sup> See Corippus, *In laudem Iustini Augusti Minoris*, ed. Averil Cameron (London, 1976), Book II, line 76.

<sup>43</sup> On this see below, 346–56.

<sup>44</sup> Corippus, *In laudem*, Book II, lines 284–85.

<sup>45</sup> She had a daughter or nurse called Firmina; see Cameron in Corippus, *In laudem*, p. 154 note 72f, where Firmina appears as her daughter according to A. Déthier. Cyril Mango informs me that the reference in the inscription discussed by Déthier is not to Arabia's daughter but to her nurse Baia. Instead of γεννημένη he reads γενομένη, and so Firmina in the inscription was referred to as one who had formerly been the nurse of Arabia, "the daughter of Justin, the glorious *curopalates*."

<sup>46</sup> On Arethas' visit to Constantinople around 540, see BASIC I.2, 755–60.

Arab phylarch of the Provincia Arabia and king of the Ghassānid Arabs by having her great-niece called Arabia.

3. There may have been an even more important, ulterior motive for calling the great-niece Arabia. The Ghassānids were in an anomalous position as Byzantium's *foederati* in the sixth century. They were staunch Monophysites, while their overlords in Constantinople were Chalcedonian Dyophysites. This had led to sharp disagreements and withdrawals from the service of Byzantium during the reign of Justin I, repeated in the reign of Justin II, when both the *ecclesia* and the *imperium* were ranged against them. Theodora and also Arethas were aware of the fragility of the position of the Ghassānids, and indeed these managed to survive during the reign of Justinian largely because of Theodora's support. So an important friend was absolutely necessary for Ghassānid continuance as *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens. It is, therefore, quite likely that the empress was aware of this, especially as she was getting old and must have wondered what would happen to the Monophysite movement after her death. Perhaps it is within this context that she suggested the naming of her great-niece Arabia in order to promote a pro-Monophysite and pro-Ghassānid mood in the capital among members of the royal family, which thus would continue her tradition of support of the Monophysite Ghassānids.

4. To what extent Arethas himself played a part in this is not clear, but he might have been aware of it. Imperial patronage in the corridors of power in Constantinople was important to him, and he understood the point. A previous chapter has drawn attention to the fact that the phylarch was not only a redoubtable warrior but also a consummate statesman. In 563 he made his famous visit to Constantinople to provide for succession to his phylarchate after his death. As he met the empress in person around 540, he must have been aware that she was not getting younger. So he could have discussed the question of the continuity in imperial policy in the future. The sources are not informative on such matters, but there may be some indication of this in the *Vita* of Simeon the Younger. The *Vita* contains references to both Justin and Sophia; there is an account of a prophecy by Simeon in 562 that Justin, still *curopalates*, would accede to the throne after the death of Justinian;<sup>47</sup> later, after the accession of Justin II as emperor, the saint cures his daughter Arabia of demonic possession.<sup>48</sup> It is not clear how these can be related to attempts to influence the doctrinal persuasion of Justin, Sophia, and Arabia, especially as the saint was not a Monophysite. But he was friendly to the Ghassānids and prophesied the victory of Arethas over the Lakhmid Muḍir in 554; also,

<sup>47</sup> See *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le jeune*, ed. and trans. Paul van den Ven, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 32 (Brussels, 1970), II, sec. 201.

<sup>48</sup> See *ibid.*, sec. 207.

some of the Ghassānid troops became inmates of his monastery in Theopolis.<sup>49</sup> These facts are presented only as possibly relevant to the relations of the new royal family with the Oriens of Monophysitism and the Ghassānids.

5. Finally, it may be said that Theodora was not unsuccessful in her attempt to prepare a Monophysitically-inclined royal family to ascend the throne of Byzantium. Both Justin and Sophia had been ardent Monophysites for a long time, and it was only in 562 that they declared for the Chalcedonian creed and Dyophysitism.<sup>50</sup> How genuine this conversion was is not clear. Justinian did not appoint his nephew caesar and co-ruler, and he remained *curopalates* until Justinian's death in November 565. Both Justin and Sophia made a public profession of the orthodox faith just before their coronation and remained Chalcedonians the rest of their lives. However, at least until 562, when the Ghassānid phylarch was still alive, all seemed well to him—the prospect of having a new royal family that was pro-Monophysite and pro-Ghassānid. As Justin and Sophia were Monophysites, their daughter presumably was also; thus not only the immediate heirs-apparent to the throne were Monophysites but also their princess daughter, Arabia.<sup>51</sup>

To sum up, the Monophysite persuasion of Justin and Sophia lasted until shortly before the death of Justinian in 565, when probably for prudence' sake both switched to the Chalcedonian position. It is difficult to resist the temptation of concluding that their Monophysite confession must be related to plans of the late empress Theodora for seeing a royal family on the throne in Constantinople, or at least an enclave within the royal family, that was Monophysite and would be able to continue to protect the movement. Within the context the name Arabia becomes significant since it adds a new dimension to the Monophysitism of the royal couple, her parents. It is a link with the Monophysitism of the Ghassānid phylarchs and *foederati*, who were the military shield of the movement in Oriens in the sixth century, and whom Theodora had judged necessary for the welfare of the Monophysite church.

In view of this, students of Arab-Byzantine relations may care to read a description of this princess as it appears in the verses of the panegyrist of her father. The date is 14 November 565, the coronation of her parents. Sophia, her mother, goes to pray in the Church of the Virgin, accompanied by her daughter, Arabia:

<sup>49</sup> On this see *BASIC* I.2, 778–82.

<sup>50</sup> The *locus classicus* for this is John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book II, sec. 10. Arethas made his journey to Constantinople soon after, in 563, perhaps after the hopes of the Monophysite party were dashed to the ground by the conversion of Justin.

<sup>51</sup> The confessional persuasion of her husband, Baduarius, is not clear. He was a Goth, and so presumably an Arian, but he must have converted to orthodoxy.



it sacrum comitata latus pulcherrima proles,  
 luce sua plenam quae possit vincere lunam,  
 aequiperans umeris matrem, sic lucida cultu,  
 sic niveis formosa genis similisque parenti,  
 igne micant oculi. nomen distabat et aetas,  
 non tamen egregiae distabat gratia formae:  
 arboris ut matris quae de radice propago  
 nascitur, et celsis caput erigit ardua ramis,  
 aequiperat novis maternam frondibus umbram,  
 at mater propriam florentem germine natam  
 gaudet habere parem, laetasque adtollit in auras  
 felices ramos et vertice despicit arva.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to this *ekphrasis* of Arabia in the Latin panegyric of Corippus, Arabia was remembered in plastic art when statues of her were set up in Constantinople.<sup>53</sup>

#### VI. THE EXPEDITION AGAINST KHAYBAR, 567(?)

An Arabic source,<sup>54</sup> Ibn Qutayba, records a campaign against the Jewish oasis of Khaybar in Ḥijāz and ascribes it to a Ghassānid king, al-Ḥārith (Arethas) ibn-abī-Shāmīr. He also records the king's taking captive its inhabitants whom he set free after he returned to Shām (Oriens). This is a precious datum on the campaigns of the Ghassānids in Arabia, but questions of authenticity and attribution must be settled before it can be considered a fact of Ghassānid history.

#### A

There is no question about the authenticity of the report. (1) It comes from Ibn Qutayba, an excellent source that furnished the invaluable report on Quṣayy and Mecca, and how he was helped in his attempt to regain control of that city by Byzantium in the fifth century. That report has been examined

<sup>52</sup> Corippus, *In laudem*, Book II, lines 72–83, trans. Cameron (ibid., pp. 95–96):

At her holy side went her beautiful daughter, who could outdo the full moon with her own light, the equal of her mother in height, as shining in her appearance, as beautiful with her snowy cheeks. Her eyes blaze with fire, like her mother's: her name and her age were different, but the grace of her noble form was not different: as a shoot which grows from the root of a mother tree and raises its head high with lofty boughs, equals its mother's shade with its young foliage, and the mother rejoices to find that her own daughter is her equal, flourishing with shoots, and raises her happy boughs to the joyful breezes, and looks down upon the meadow from her top.

<sup>53</sup> Cameron speaks of two statues, one at the Milion and another at the harbor of Sophia; ibid., p. 154, note 72f.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'ārif*, ed. Th. 'Ukāsha (Cairo, 1981), 642.

and found authentic.<sup>55</sup> (2) The statement on Khaybar might have come from an invaluable source for the history of the Ghassānids, which unfortunately has been lost—*Akbbār Mulūk Ghassān*.<sup>56</sup> (3) A campaign by a Ghassānid king against the Jewish oasis is perfectly credible. The Ghassānids, as has been pointed out, had many brushes with the Jews of Ḥijāz. They had helped their relatives, the Aws and Khazraj of Yathrib (Medina), against the Jewish tribes of that city. Even more recently there was possibly the Ghassānid expedition against another Jewish oasis in Ḥijāz, Taymā'.<sup>57</sup>

Furthermore, it is also possible to set the expedition against a larger, more intelligible context for the activity of the Ghassānid *foederatus* of Byzantium in Ḥijāz—the growth of Persian influence in that region in the second half of the sixth century. The Jews always sided with the Persians in the latter's struggle with Byzantium.<sup>58</sup> Finally, there is that controversial and mysterious expedition led by Abraha, the Ethiopian king of South Arabia, against Mecca, commonly known as the Expedition of the Elephant which, according to one view, took place roughly around this date. Is it possible that the two expeditions were somehow connected? Abraha and Arethas were both Monophysites and moved within the orbit of Byzantium. The two were in touch with each other, since around 540 Arethas sent a representative to Abraha as a member of a Byzantine embassy, in which his brother Abū Karib and his overlord Justinian participated, both of whom also sent representatives. Could Arethas and Abraha have been conducting expeditions against non-Christian pockets in Ḥijāz, represented by Judaism in Khaybar and paganism in Mecca?<sup>59</sup>

Thus there is little doubt about the authenticity of the account: there was a Ghassānid expedition against Khaybar. Ibn Qutayba attributes it to the famous Arethas of the reign of Justinian. Is this attribution correct? It is possible that some other Ḥārith (Arethas) later in the century or early in the following one may have undertaken this expedition. But the attribution in Ibn Qutayba may be correct. (1) Ibn Qutayba calls the Ghassānid king al-Ḥārith (Arethas) ibn-abī-Shāmīr. Nöldeke has conclusively shown that this

<sup>55</sup> See *BAFIC*, 355–60. For Ibn Qutayba (828–889), see *ibid.*, 356.

<sup>56</sup> On this work, see *BASIC II*. Ibn Qutayba used the *Muḥabbar* of Ibn Ḥabīb extensively as his source, but he also used others; see the introduction by 'Ukāsha in *Ma'ārif*, 70. As his account of the Ghassānids differs considerably from that of the *Muḥabbar*, he must have used another source and, as has been suggested, this source could have been *Akbbār Mulūk Ghassān*.

<sup>57</sup> On the Ghassānids and Medina, see above, 122–23, and *BASIC I.2*, 855–56. Other raids on the Jewish settlements in Ḥijāz are recorded, such as that of the Kalbite chief al-Ḥārith ibn-Ḥiṣn ibn-Ḍamḍam against Fadak, for which see Abū al-Baqa', *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya*, ed. S. Daradika and M. Khuraysāt (Amman, 1984), I, 144, 287. For the Ghassānids and Taymā', see *BASIC II*.

<sup>58</sup> See Kister, "Al-Ḥīra," 143–49.

<sup>59</sup> On Abraha and Mecca, see *BASIC II*.

patronymic which goes with the name "Arethas" makes the bearer of that name and patronymic none other than the famous Arethas of the reign of Justinian.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, Ibn Qutayba describes him as the most powerful and famous of all the Ghassānid kings, and this can only be the son of Jabala, Justinian's Ghassānid client. (2) It is not likely that Ibn Qutayba made a mistake in attributing the campaign to Arethas ibn-abī-Shāmir. The passage he devotes to this Arethas is the most extensive one in which he discusses the Ghassānid kings; thus there is no doubt that he is discussing the most famous of them, who appears as the son of Jabala in Procopius and in the Arabic sources, and sometimes with a patronymic—ibn-abī-Shāmir. (3) The passage is detailed and recounts feats recognizable as those of the son of Jabala, such as the defeat of the Lakhmid Muḍir and his death in the encounter. Furthermore, the detail that he took captive the Jews of Khaybar brings to mind the Arethas who captured and took captive the Samaritans of Palestine during the revolt of 529. Thus the chances are that the Ghassānid king who conducted the expedition against Khaybar was indeed Arethas, son of Jabala.

## B

Epigraphic confirmation of the expedition against Khaybar has been argued by E. Littmann. In commenting on the Ḥarrān inscription (in the Provincia Arabia), set up by a phylarch, Sharāḥīl ibn-Zālim, in 568, Littmann translated the last Arabic sentence of the bilingual inscription as "One year after the expedition of Khaybar" and saw in this a reference to the expedition mentioned by Ibn Qutayba.<sup>61</sup>

This interpretation is most persuasive, and much can be said in its favor. It would add a valuable new datum: the date of the campaign against Khaybar, 567. It would also make certain that the Ghassānid who conducted the campaign was Arethas, son of Jabala, since he was alive in 567. But could he have undertaken such an arduous campaign in faraway Khaybar so late in life? Only four years before he had made the long journey to Constantinople. Although he was getting older, he was not yet a doddering old man but was still physically strong enough to make a powerful impression on the capital. Also, the Syriac tradition sends him to Constantinople even as late as 569 in defense of Monophysitism against the Tritheistic heresy of Eugenius and Conon.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps the old warrior was nostalgic for taking the field, which he had not done since 554, the date of his great victory over Muḍir. The latter conducted his last but fatal campaign when he was at least seventy. Arethas was younger; he must have been around sixty, still strong enough to lead the

<sup>60</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 21.

<sup>61</sup> On this bilingual inscription (Greek and Arabic), see below, 325–31.

<sup>62</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 808–24.

expedition against Khaybar.<sup>63</sup> As will be argued later, he did not succumb to an illness when he died in 569, since he most probably died in an earthquake.<sup>64</sup>

The foregoing remarks do not establish with certainty the expedition in 567, but make it quite likely. Arethas' conduct of the campaign sheds light on Abū Karib, his brother, as it draws attention to the fact that the Ghassānid who conducted it was not the one who was expected to do so, namely, Abū Karib, the phylarch of Palaestina Tertia, who was strategically situated to undertake it from his base in southern Palestine or northern Ḥijāz. The presumption, then, is that Abū Karib had died by 567, and so his brother conducted the campaign. The possible reference to the campaign of Khaybar in the Ḥarrān inscription reflects its importance and its impact on contemporaries,<sup>65</sup> so much so that the phylarch found it appropriate to refer to it after giving the date in the Era of Bostra as an alternative dating for his bilingual inscription.<sup>66</sup>

#### VII. THE ḤARRĀN INSCRIPTION

The Ḥarrān inscription is the only federate bilingual inscription (Greek and Arabic) to be found in Oriens. Ḥarrān, where it was found, is not Mesopotamian Ḥarrān but the less famous one in the Trachonitis (al-Lajā) in the northern part of the Provincia Arabia. The inscription was discovered and published by J. G. Wetzstein and studied by a number of scholars since then, mainly in an attempt to decipher its Arabic portion. After many unsuccessful attempts, R. Dussaud<sup>67</sup> definitively solved one of the two difficulties of the Arabic text and Littmann gave the most satisfactory solution of the other.<sup>68</sup> The inscription is important and deserves a close philological examination and historical commentary.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Munḍir reigned for fifty years and so must have been seventy when he died, since presumably he was at least twenty when he succeeded to the kingship of Ḥīra. Arethas was younger, since he became phylarch in 529, that is, some twenty-five years after Munḍir began his reign. Presumably he too could not have been less than twenty when he became phylarch.

<sup>64</sup> On the possibility that his death was the result of an earthquake at Jillaq, see *BASIC II*.

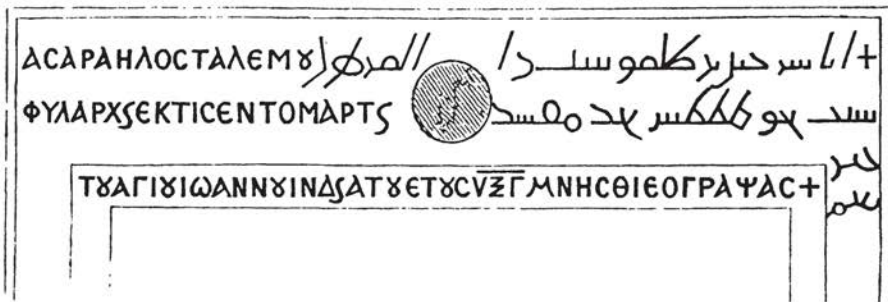
<sup>65</sup> It is interesting to note that this possible reference to Khaybar does not appear in the Greek part of the bilingual inscription of Ḥarrān. Such a reference would have been important only to the Arab reader of the inscription and not to the Greek.

<sup>66</sup> The Arabs used to date by reference to important events in their history; for such events, see Ḥamza, *Tārīkh*, 118–20. Thus the reign of Arethas became one of those events. Some ten years earlier than the campaign of Khaybar, a Monophysite monastic community dated the foundation of its convent by the *phylarchia* of Arethas; see above, 259–60.

<sup>67</sup> See R. Dussaud and F. Macler, *Mission scientifique dans les régions désertiques de la Syrie Moyenne*, *Nouvelles archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires* 10 (Paris, 1903), 726–27.

<sup>68</sup> See E. Littmann, "Osservazioni sulle iscrizioni di Harran e di Zebed," *Rivista degli studi orientali* 4 (1911), 193–98.

<sup>69</sup> The inscription is reproduced here from W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris, 1870; repr. Rome, 1968), p. 561, no. 2464.



#### Philological Observations

The Greek portion of the inscription presents no difficulties. It speaks of the erection of a *martyrion* dedicated to St. John in the year 463, by the phylarch Sharāhīl ibn-Zālim, and ends with a wish that the engraver of the inscription be remembered by posterity. The date is given in the Era of Bostra and corresponds to A.D. 568.

The Greek part is more informative than the Arabic and has been the key to unlocking some of the difficulties of the latter which derive from the non-employment of diacritical points in Semitic epigraphy. The clear part of the Arabic inscription says: "I Sharāhīl, son of Zālim, have built this *martyrion* in the year 463." After this follow four words that have been variously interpreted but most persuasively by Littmann as "ba'd mafsad Khaybr bi 'ām," which he rendered "un anno dopo la spedizione di Khaibar"<sup>70</sup> ("a year after the expedition of Khaibar"). Dussaud, as mentioned, had correctly interpreted the words that he translated as the date, 463, but he was not so successful in interpreting the final sentence, which he read "ba'd mafsad ḥinaidīn na'am," and which he translated "après la corruption, la prospérité(?)."<sup>71</sup>

As the Arabic version of the inscription is not an exact equivalent of the Greek, the following comments on its language may be made. The first person singular pronoun, *anā*, is used in opening the inscription.<sup>72</sup> There are two Syriacisms in the inscription: the employment of *bar* instead of *ibn-* for "son"

<sup>70</sup> Littmann, "Osservazioni," 194-95.

<sup>71</sup> *Mission scientifique*, 726-27.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the style of the Usays inscription, above, 118, which begins with the name of the one who had the inscription engraved, not with the pronoun, *anā*; but the reading "Ibrāhīm" is not certain.



and the use of the long vowel *waw* at the end of *Zalīm*, just as *ʿAmrū* is used instead of *ʿAmr* in the *Namāra* inscription.<sup>73</sup> The word *martyrion* is not translated as *mashhad* but transliterated *martūr*, more likely *martūr* than *martūl* as in Dussaud and Littmann, since the Arabic (*rā*) not (*lām*) should reflect Greek *rho* in *martyrion*.

However, the important sentence in the Arabic version is the last one, and here Littmann's reading and translation of the inscription are cogent. Moreover, they endow the inscription with a historical significance that will become apparent. The following may be added to what Littmann has said, partly giving more support to his position.

1. Littmann has shown conclusively that on palaeographical grounds Dussaud's reading of the third word in the last sentence as *hina idin* has to be rejected. It may also be added that the word has no place in the sentence since it ruffles the syntax; it even becomes redundant, as is clear from the French translation which leaves it out.

2. Littmann's reading of the third word as *Khaybar* is sound palaeographically; what is more, with it the sentence becomes a good Arabic sentence, which is not the case with Dussaud's reading.

3. Littmann translates the second word, *mafsad*, as *spedizione*—an expedition against *Khaybar*—and he supports this translation by invoking the testimony of Snouck Hurgronje and Ibn Khaldūn. This is possible, but a refinement on this translation would be to give *mafsad* its more natural meaning related to its root (FSD), that is, "destruction, molestation, ruining," since the expedition was a military campaign against *Khaybar* that resulted in taking part of its population as prisoners of war.

4. Littmann supports his reading as a contribution to dating this inscription by pointing out that this kind of dating by reference to a war or a campaign is used often in Semitic inscriptions, and he gives examples from Safaitic and Ethiopic epigraphy. One may add that this reading is contextually defensible. The inscription has just indicated in the Era of Bostra the date of the construction of the *martyrion*, namely, the year 463, and the last sentence gives more precision to the date and endows it with a detail that is significant to the Arab reader and to the function of the phylarch: that this happened a year after the campaign against *Khaybar*, conducted by the chief phylarch of the Provincia, *Arethas* the *Ghassānid*, a campaign mentioned in other sources.

5. It is noteworthy that the inscription uses two different words for "year," *sanat* and *ʿām*; apparently the engraver wanted to vary his idiom. The former is the regular word for reflecting dates epigraphically, and so the em-

<sup>73</sup> For *ʿAmrū* in the *Namāra* inscription, see the present writer in "Philological Observations on the *Namāra* Inscription," *JSS* 24 (1979), 33.



ployment of *‘ām* was apparently deemed necessary since it might have been confusing to the reader if it was repeated at the end of the inscription.

Littmann's reading and translation of the Arabic inscription is not absolutely certain, but it is almost so.

#### Historical Commentary

The inscription is precious in view of the paucity of federate inscriptions and deserves a full historical commentary, especially as it has been mainly in the hands of philologists and epigraphers. Nöldeke discussed it in his monographs on the Ghassānids,<sup>74</sup> but unfortunately, and surprisingly, he made a number of mistakes. It is best to begin by disposing of these.

a. He stated that Ḥarrān is east of Damascus, and hence the province in which it is located must be Phoenicia Libanensis. Ḥarrān is actually south of Damascus in the Trachonitis, and its province is not Phoenicia but Arabia.

b. He argued that the phylarch in question must have been a Kindite on the ground that the name Sharāḥīl occurs in the genealogical tree of this tribal group. This is possible, but the name is also a Ghassānid<sup>75</sup> one and the phylarch could equally well be a Ghassānid related to Arethas, the Ghassānid phylarch of Arabia.

c. The reason he gives for his Kindite provenance cannot be accepted, namely, that Byzantium used the Kindite phylarch as a check on the Ghassānids and Arethas. He rests his view on the fact that Byzantium installed a Kindite phylarch in Palestine, Qays, and also another one, Abū Karib.<sup>76</sup> But neither appointment was a reflection of any mistrust that Byzantium harbored toward Arethas the Ghassānid. The appointment of Qays to Palestine was not so much a slight to Arethas and a check on his power as it was a sop to Cerberus after the waning of the power of Kinda in the Arabian Peninsula, as has been explained earlier.<sup>77</sup> Abū Karib was actually a Ghassānid and, what is more, the brother of Arethas, a fact unknown to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph<sup>78</sup> and which became known only after the publication of the Sabaic Dam inscription of Abraha by E. Glaser in 1899. Inter-phylarchal friction, as noted by Nöldeke, between Arethas and al-Aswad was only natural but not of frequent occurrence and cannot support the view that Kinda was a check on Ghassān.<sup>79</sup> In fact the two tribal groups were on friendly terms and both

<sup>74</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 16–17.

<sup>75</sup> For Sharāḥīl as a Ghassānid name, see Hishām al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 619. Moreover, Arabia was the province of the Ghassānid phylarchs, not the Kindites who appear assigned to one or more of the three Palestines.

<sup>76</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 17 note 1.

<sup>77</sup> On this see above, 153–60.

<sup>78</sup> On Abū Karib see above, 124–30.

<sup>79</sup> On Arethas and Aswad, see above, 251–55.

moved in the orbit of Byzantium against Lakhm, their common enemy, the client of Sasanid Persia. So the view that Sharāḥīl was a check on Arethas has to be totally rejected. In 568 Arethas was at the end of his distinguished career and deserved well of Byzantium; as recently as 563 he had made a visit to Constantinople when he arranged for the succession of his son, Mundir. So he enjoyed the full confidence of the central government.

The Ḥarrān inscription provides an opportunity to discuss the phylarchal situation in the Provincia Arabia and some cultural matters in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, to be added to the historical observations that have been made in the previous section on the campaign against Khaybar.

There is no doubt that Sharāḥīl, who erected the *martyrion*, was not just another chief in the area but a phylarch in the technical sense. This is reflected in the use of the technical term φύλαρχος (*phylarchos*) in the Greek portion of the inscription, and was so understood by Nöldeke.

This is a welcome addition to the study of the phylarchal system in the Provincia. The last mention of a phylarch in Arabia was in 536 in the novel on Arabia issued by Justinian. In that novel the implication is that the Provincia had only one phylarch—the supreme phylarch, Arethas. But some thirty years had passed since then, and apparently Byzantium had increased the number of phylarchs allotted to Arabia. It will be remembered that Phoenicia, in the edict issued by Justinian in the same year, had more than one phylarch.<sup>80</sup>

Why Byzantium increased the number of phylarchs in Arabia is not clear. It may be that the phylarchal system had proven its worth. More plausible is the fact that Arethas was getting old and that he thought fit to delegate authority to a minor phylarch for supervising the area in the north of the province. This particular part of it, Trachonitis (al-Lajā), was especially rugged and posed problems of security since the days of the Herods. Arethas himself had some association with it earlier in the century when in 529 he quelled the revolt of the Samaritans, some of whom fled to this very region.<sup>81</sup>

The reference in the Arabic portion of the inscription to the Ghassānid campaign against Khaybar is a further indication of the relationship of Sharāḥīl to Arethas as the supreme phylarch. Arethas was his immediate chief within the phylarchal system, and dating the building of the *martyrion* by relating it to the campaign of his chief was a reflection of his subordination as well as of the importance of the campaign. It is possible that he took part in it. A campaign that carried the supreme phylarch to faraway Khaybar<sup>82</sup> must have been a major one, and Arethas must have ordered other phylarchs to join

<sup>80</sup> For a discussion of the two documents on Arabia and Phoenicia, see above, 196–98, 200–206.

<sup>81</sup> On the Samaritan revolt, see above, 82–92.

<sup>82</sup> As already noted by Littmann, "Osservazioni," 195.

him in the expedition, just as that against the Lakhmid Muḍir in 528 entailed the collaboration of several phylarchs including Arethas himself.<sup>83</sup>

Cultural data, even more important than the political and the military, may also be extracted from this inscription. The erection of the *martyrion* reflects the attachment of the Ghassānids to Christianity, attested elsewhere and in various ways. This is another piece of evidence that the Ghassānid *foederati* were not rude soldiers but zealous Christians who fought their wars as such. It is also more evidence for the fact that the *foederati*, especially the Ghassānids, were not pastoralists but a sedentary force whose life was related to that of the community in which they lived, which was Christian.

It also supports the essential truth of the List of Ḥamza<sup>84</sup> on the many buildings he ascribes to the Ghassānids. Sharāḥil was a minor phylarch, one among many, and belonged to one generation of phylarchs. These endured in the service of Byzantium for roughly one hundred and fifty years. The *martyrion* that he erected could not have been an isolated phenomenon; other phylarchs probably acted similarly during this long period.

The structure is described not as an *ecclesia* but a *martyrion*,<sup>85</sup> and specifically dedicated to St. John. This may not be significant, but it is worth speculating on these two facts. If the phylarch participated in the campaign against Khaybar, the presumption is that some federate soldiers died in the expedition and he may have erected the religious structure strictly as a *martyrion* to reflect his safe return and to remember those who died.<sup>86</sup> The reference to Khaybar in the inscription is striking, coming as it does after the reference to his building the structure. Not far from Ḥarrān was Najrān, the namesake of the more famous Najrān in South Arabia, the city of the Arab martyrs.<sup>87</sup> The dedication to St. John the Baptist was also appropriate. He was, of course, the first martyr, even before St. Stephen.<sup>88</sup> The sources of the

<sup>83</sup> On this, see above, 70–73.

<sup>84</sup> For Ḥamza's list see *BASIC II*.

<sup>85</sup> Strictly speaking, a *martyrion* is a church that marks the site of the grave of a martyr or one that contains relics of martyred saints; see H. C. Butler, *Early Churches in Syria* (Princeton, 1929), Part I, p. 250. But the distinction between a *martyrion* and a church (*ecclesia*) became less clear in the 4th century when relics were translated to churches that had not been erected as *martyria*. However, the chances are that this structure built by the phylarch was truly a *martyrion*.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. the case of the son of Arethas, Jabala, who fell in the battle of Chalcis in 554 and whom his father buried in a *martyrion*; see above, 243.

<sup>87</sup> For Najrān in Trachonitis, see the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 79.

<sup>88</sup> Another *martyrion* dedicated to St. John the Baptist was erected by a Rhomaic Arab called Flavius Na'mān at al-Ramthāniyya in the Golān in 377. Claudine Dauphin has suggested that this *martyrion* was built over one of the relics of the Baptist which were dispersed in the region after the destruction of his tomb at Sebaste in 361–362 during the reign of Julian; see Claudine Dauphin, "Er-Ramthaniyya: Surveying an Early Bedouin Byzantine Pilgrimage Centre in the Golan Heights," *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 8 (1988–89), 82–85.

river Jordan, where his ministry took place, were not far from Ḥarrān, and he was venerated in many of the churches in Oriens, which were built over relics of his. The head of St. John the Baptist was said to be in Damascus over which the cathedral dedicated to him was erected.

Finally, the employment of Arabic in one portion of the inscription is noteworthy. It reflects the fact that the federate phylarchs remained aware of their Arabness in spite of their long association with the Byzantine Greek Orient. They were not completely assimilated to the point of losing their Arab identity. Furthermore, the name Sharāḥīl ibn-Zālim is resoundingly Arab. Unlike the Arab *Rhomaioi*, the *foederati* apparently did not assume Graeco-Roman names or even Semitic biblical ones.<sup>89</sup>

#### VIII. MENANDER AND THE ARABS

Of the four secular historians of the sixth century—Procopius, Agathias, Menander, and Theophylact—Menander is the most virulent in his projection of the image of the Arabs, especially the Lakhmids, and by implication the Ghassānids. This is amply clear from an examination of the two fragments that involve the Lakhmids' role in the negotiations of the year 567. It is convenient to divide the discussion into two parts: the first on the Lakhmids and the second on the Ghassānids.

#### A

Menander's antipathies toward the Lakhmids are patent in his account of the negotiations, both in his own comments and in those he puts in the

<sup>89</sup> J. Halévy gave a most curious translation of the Ḥarrān inscription: "J'ai bâti cette chapelle à saint Jean, qui fut mis à mort par de méchants Juifs. Que cela nous porte bonheur!" quoted by R. Aigrain, "Arabie," *DHGE*, III, col. 1213. This interpretation has been invalidated, as others have been, by those of Dussaud and Littmann, and there is certainly no anti-Semitic sentiment in the inscription. However, this interpretation by the Jewish scholar could raise the question whether there was some connection between a victory over the Jews of Khaybar and the dedication of a *martyrion* to the Baptist who was martyred by Herod, a Jew in the Christian perception. This, however, is unlikely.

In his notice of this inscription, Sartre speaks of the name of the phylarch as Azraïl and of his being a contemporary of Munḍir, the son of Arethas; see *TE*, 177 and note 217. Azraïl is not an Arabic name, and the correct name of the phylarch is Sharāḥīl, as understood by Nöldeke; Arethas did not die until 569, a year after the inscription was engraved, when Munḍir succeeded him. Sartre also refers to Sharāḥīl as "un chef local soumis aux Ghassānides." The use of "chef local" to describe Sharāḥīl is unfortunate, since this *could* imply non-phylarchal status. There is no doubt that Sharāḥīl was a Byzantine phylarch in the technical sense of the term. Furthermore, his command was in the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, hence "la provenance du document" does not preclude that he was a Ghassānid, and, as has been noted earlier (above, note 75), the name does occur in the genealogical lists of the Ghassānids. In his notice of the inscription, Sartre depended on Waddington (*Inscriptions*, p. 563), who wrote more than a century ago in 1870, rather than on Nöldeke, the specialist on the Ghassānids. Waddington's interpretation of the second line of the Arabic version of the inscription is almost illiterate (*ibid.*, 565); it has been correctly read and interpreted by Littmann and others.

mouths of others. He begins by giving an unflattering description of the Saracens as "tribes, for the most part leaderless desert-dwellers." He characterizes the Lakhmids as a "very greedy people." To John, son of Domentiolus, he ascribes the following: "whenever I say 'Saracens,' think, Medes upon the uncouthness and unreliability of that people." The climax of this vituperation is reserved for the last stage in the negotiations with Justin. Menander has Mebod, the Persian ambassador, say: "A curse upon all the Saracen tribes and Ambrus and their embassy." Justin, too, invokes many a curse upon the Saracen envoy and describes him as a "turncoat and huckster" and an "accursed criminal," and ends by saying that "it would be laughable if we, the Romans, became tributary to the Saracen race, nomads at that."<sup>90</sup>

There is no doubt that in his image of the Arabs Menander was in the tradition of Byzantine historiography, which viewed all barbarians in the same light. He certainly sympathized with Justin's decision to stop the subsidies to the barbarians that Justinian had extended, and so it is perfectly credible that Justin could have uttered these imprecations against the Arabs. It is, however, doubtful that the Persian ambassador, Mebod, would have invoked curses upon his allies, the Saracens, and so this may be an embroidery by Menander.<sup>91</sup> But, as will be argued, there was more to Menander's antipathies toward the Arabs, Lakhmid and others, than the anti-barbarian attitude that inspired the Romans and the analysts of Roman decline among the Byzantine historians.

## B

Much more important is his attitude to the Ghassānids, who were not Byzantium's enemies as the Lakhmids were, but her allies. In all the fragments there is only one reference to a Ghassānid figure, Mundīr, and it comes parenthetically in the wake of Menander's account of what the Lakhmids did when their ambassador returned from Constantinople empty-handed. The fact that Menander has survived only in fragments makes judgments on him and his attitude toward the Ghassānids rather hazardous, but enough is known about him to suggest that what he thought of the Ghassānids was not much different from what he thought of the Lakhmids. It is therefore necessary to examine this possible image in the pages of Menander, all the more so because the Ghassānids were Byzantium's allies, whose quarrel with Justin II and Maurice in the 570s brought about the souring of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, with serious consequences for the course of Byzantine history.

Traces of antipathies toward the Ghassānids are discernible in the following references in Menander.

<sup>90</sup> For all these anti-Arab sentiments, see Blockley, *Menander*, 99, 101, 111.

<sup>91</sup> B. Baldwin regards the speeches in Menander as essentially his own confections; see Baldwin, "Menander Protector," 118; cf. Blockley, *Menander*, 9-10.

1. First and foremost come his general observations on the Saracens in the preface to his account of the mission of John, son of Domentiolus, to Chosroes in Ctesiphon: "There are countless Saracen tribes, for the most part leaderless desert-dwellers, some of whom are subject to the Romans, others to the Persians."<sup>92</sup> The Ghassānids clearly are subsumed under the category of Saracens subject to the Romans. When Menander wrote, the Ghassānids had been in the service of Byzantium for almost a century, during which they fought in the Roman manner, were under disciplined leadership—Jabala, Arethas, Mundir—built churches, monasteries, and palaces, and were zealous Christians. And yet they appear in Menander's account as allied to Saracens who are described as ἀδέσποτοι ("leaderless") and ἐρημονομοί ("desert-dwellers"). It is not expected of Menander to expatiate on the Ghassānids and their virtues in the midst of a discourse on the Lakhmids, but nevertheless his general observations on the Saracens, among whom he includes gratuitously the Ghassānids, are striking and indicate his attitude.

2. Throughout the long fragments on the Lakhmids, Menander balances the Roman Arabs, the Ghassānids, with the Persian Arabs, the Lakhmids. As he blasted the Lakhmids throughout with comments partly his own and partly put in the mouth of others, this rubs off on the Ghassānids and could carry conviction with the reader whom he had prepared for accepting his perception by the preface to his account, in which he predicated a common origin for the two groups of Saracens and a common *ethos* as leaderless, desert barbarians.

3. His desire to denigrate the Ghassānids and present them under an unfavorable light is confirmed by his curious avoidance of describing them as allies (ὑπόσπονδοι, σύμμαχοι) and, what is more, his describing them as subjects (ὑπήκοοι).<sup>93</sup> This attempt to demote them is all the more remarkable considering that he certainly knew their correct status as σύμμαχοι ("allies"). He specifically recorded this in one of the articles of the treaty of 561, on which he wrote so extensively. In the text of the same treaty he distinguishes between allies (σύμμαχοι) and subjects (ὑπήκοοι).<sup>94</sup> Thus the Ghassānids in Menander never appear as allies but only as a group of barbarian Saracens, not different from their Persian counterparts, the unpleasant Lakhmids.

4. Consonant with this attempt to demote the Ghassānids from allies to subjects is his complete avoidance of the correct terms that describe the military commanders. The most important term was, of course, phylarch (φύλαρχος), not in the sense of a tribal chief but in the Byzantine sense of a Saracen ally in the Byzantine army. This is the term defined by Procopius and

<sup>92</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 99.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98, line 33.

<sup>94</sup> On these two terms in the articles of the peace treaty of 561, see Blockley, *Menander*, p. 70, line 320, and p. 72, line 358.



the one used to describe Arethas in Theophanes, when he visited Constantinople full of years and honors as *patricius* and *phylarchos*. Instead Menander uses the term incorrectly and applies it to the Lakhmid king, 'Amr, who was a king and vassal of Persia and whose description as *phylarchos* is thus both incorrect and misleading.<sup>95</sup> In so doing, Menander succeeded in stripping the term of its technical Byzantine connotation as defined by Procopius and made it carry the implication that the Ghassānid phylarch was a *phylarchos* on the same level as the enemy, 'Amr, a desert tribal chief; the point is clinched when, in his final words, he describes the Lakhmids as nomads—another false statement to be added to others in his account. As has been said earlier, Menander was writing toward the end of the century and lived in Constantinople; consequently he must have been aware of the assimilation of the Ghassānids to the Byzantine system and indeed their integration. Moreover, he lived and worked in Constantinople, the scene of Mundīr's visit in the 570s and his "coronation" by Tiberius. Yet not a word about the true status of the Ghassānids in the Byzantine world. Mundīr appears once in his fragments, and even in that solitary context he is not accurately described as a phylarch but as ἡγούμενος,<sup>96</sup> a vague term instead of the technical term *phylarchos* that allied him to the Byzantine system. Even the last sentence that describes the "territory of Mundīr" suggests that "it was on the borders of Arabia." Although the description is true or may be true, it separates the Ghassānids from imperial territory and further suggests that they were a group of roaming nomads living outside the *imperium*.

The foregoing paragraphs have marshaled enough evidence to raise the suspicion that Menander was writing about and against the Ghassānids from a certain point of view. An examination of his background and milieu will confirm these suspicions. Like all Romans and members of the Graeco-Roman establishment, he viewed all barbarians<sup>97</sup> as a threat to the Roman system. When these asked for gold and subsidies, they were adding insult to injury. But Menander was establishmentarian in two other important senses. He was in the mainstream of Byzantine secular historiography of the sixth century, an admirer of Procopius and Agathias. The first set the tone for subsequent Byzantine perception of the Arabs in historiography as unreliable allies and outright traitors. The second, also a pupil of Procopius, continued his traditions. He kept silent on what the Ghassānids did in the 550s and thus succeeded in consigning them to irrelevance. As an admirer of Procopius and his continuator Agathias,<sup>98</sup> Menander could not write otherwise about the Ghassānids, and

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 106, line 45.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 110, line 121.

<sup>97</sup> Baldwin, "Menander Protector," 114–15; Blockley, *Menander*, 29.

<sup>98</sup> One of his extant fragments expresses his admiration for Procopius; Blockley, *Menander*, frag. 14.2, p. 147. See also Baldwin, "Menander Protector," 109.

the fact speaks for itself as the basis for understanding his omissions and commissions.

Perhaps more important is that not only did he write during the reign of Maurice, but he was also his protégé. The inveterate enmity of Maurice toward the Ghassānid Mundir is well known,<sup>99</sup> and so the conclusion is inescapable that the prejudice of the patron and *fautor* dominated the thinking of the protégé when he wrote his *History*. Also, Menander was a Christian, presumably a Chalcedonian.<sup>100</sup> If so, it is not impossible that he saw in the strongly Monophysite Ghassānids a schismatic group that was disrupting the ecclesiastical unity of the empire with political implications as a centrifugal force. Hence his dislike of the Ghassānids Arethas and Mundir who were the pillars of the movement both politically and militarily.

### C

It remains to examine the references in Menander to the Arabs, with a view to ascertaining exactly what image he was interested in projecting of the Ghassānids and how he effected it. Menander has survived in fragments. Yet in spite of this, and although the accidents of survival must be taken into account in an appraisal of a fragmentary historian, there is enough to suggest that Menander must have engaged in a process of denigration not unlike that of Procopius. He wrote a large-scale history of a recent period from 557/58 to 582 and thus could not have ignored the Ghassānids who played a significant role in this very period. Since he was so blatantly and virulently anti-Arab, the image, it may be safely asserted, was an uncomplimentary one. And it is possible to discern in his account of the Ghassānids a series of *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri*.

1. Arethas' visit to Constantinople in 563 was important since it dealt with Ghassānid-Lakhmid relations and the succession to the *phylarchia* after his death. In the pages of Theophanes, Arethas appears as a respectable Byzantine functionary, a responsible phylarch who journeys to the capital to report Lakhmid violations of the peace treaty and to arrange for his successor. In view of the anti-Arab attitude of Menander, inherited from Procopius, he most probably ignored recording this visit which would have presented Arethas in a favorable light and as the recipient of the highest Byzantine dignity, the patriciate, all of which would not have squared with Menander's preconceptions and prejudices and the image he had projected of the Arabs, Ghassānids as well as Lakhmids. In the style of Agathias, he would most probably have remained silent on the visit. He could not remain silent on the Ghassānids when he discussed the treaty of 561 since the role of the Ghassānid *foederati* was intimately involved in the Persian-Byzantine conflict and the

<sup>99</sup> Baldwin, "Menander Protector," 113.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

treaty that concluded it, unlike the visit to Constantinople in 563 which was an isolated episode. But even in his reference to the Ghassānids in 561, Menander deprived them of their onomastic identity as Ghassānids.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, he presented them and the Lakhmids as quarrelsome Saracens who were a threat to the stability of the eastern front and the peaceful coexistence of Persia and Byzantium.

2. In the 570s the Ghassānid Muḍīr was the object of intrigues and betrayals in which both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* were involved at the highest levels—emperors, patriarchs, and *magistri militum*—and he was finally betrayed and treacherously captured.<sup>102</sup> Had it not been for John of Ephesus, who detailed all this, these facts would have remained consigned to oblivion, and Muḍīr would have appeared as a rebellious and treacherous Saracen chief, who was meted condign punishment by the Byzantine emperor, the version in the Greek sources that have survived for this period. Menander would have been in this current of Byzantine historiography on Muḍīr, complete silence on all these imperial and ecclesiastical intrigues against him, especially as recounting them would have belied the image he wanted to project of the Ghassānid as a traitor.

3. A close examination of some of Menander's phraseology on the Arabs, especially the Lakhmids, could reveal that it served not only to condemn the Lakhmids and the Lakhmid ambassador but also to prepare the reader for a fuller acceptance of his conception of their counterparts, the Ghassānids, a reflection of the official view of Chalcedonian Constantinople. Two phrases in particular are relevant. In his reference to the Lakhmids concerning the question of the subsidies that they demanded, he throws in the parenthetical remark that they are a very greedy people (πλεονεκτικώτατον γὰρ τὸ φύλον)<sup>103</sup> and are always asking for gold. In the early 570s, Muḍīr asks Justin for gold in order to buy horses, necessary for dealing with the Lakhmid threat. This was a reasonable request made by an ally and completely different from that of the Lakhmids, but it brought Muḍīr into conflict with Justin. Menander most probably took the side of Justin in recounting Muḍīr's request and referred to it in terms not different from those in which he described the Lakhmid request, as an expression of Saracen greed. Menander's introductory notice of the Arabs in which he equated the Persian Saracens and Byzantine Saracens as nomads of the Peninsula would have helped Menander's statement carry conviction that Muḍīr was just another 'Amr and in his greed the counterpart of his Saracen congener.

<sup>101</sup> While Nonnosus, the ambassador to the Kindites, correctly refers to them as such and not simply as Saracens; on Nonnosus and Kinda, see above, 148–60.

<sup>102</sup> On this see below, 459–63.

<sup>103</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, p. 98, lines 38–39.

There is also the description of the Lakhmid ambassador as a "turncoat": μεταβολεύς,<sup>104</sup> another reference to Lakhmid "unreliability."<sup>105</sup> This, as the preceding remark on their greed, could easily prepare the reader to accept the monstrous charge leveled by Greek historians against Mundir, that he was a traitor to the cause of the Romans when he informed the Persians of the plans of Maurice. The chances are that this was the image of Mundir in the pages of Menander when he was recounting the events of the 570s. Instead of recognizing the outstanding qualities of Mundir and his services,<sup>106</sup> he must have accepted the version of his patron Maurice on what had happened.

#### IX. THE DEATH OF ARETHAS, 569

The Greek sources do not record the death of Arethas.<sup>107</sup> Syriac Monophysite documents imply it; the Arabic sources definitely refer to it without specifying the date; and John of Ephesus is the only author who explicitly refers to it, but in the context of an attack by the Lakhmids immediately after his death.<sup>108</sup> The date of his death, it is practically certain, was 569. This is inferable from the Syriac ecclesiastical sources, while an Arabic source confirms that he ruled for forty years, which thus makes his death take place in 569 since it was in 529 that he began his rule as king.<sup>109</sup> Unlike the death of his father, Jabala, who fell in the battle of Thannūris, the manner of Arethas' death can only be inferred from some reliable Arabic sources, verses of the pre-Islamic poet Labīd. Most probably it took place as a result of an earthquake that shook the region of Jilliq, a well-known Ghassānid royal residence, in the vicinity of Damascus.<sup>110</sup> The last few years of the reign reveal the Ghassānid phylarch at his best. Three dimensions of his personality are patent: the statesman, the man of peace, and the redoubtable leader.

1. The hardy warrior proved himself an astute statesman. Before his death he settled the problem of succession to his power, a matter of considerable importance to the stability of the phylarchate of Oriens, composed as it was of many tribal groups. He clearly realized that the settlement of this problem was imperative for insuring the continuity of the structure he had built in the course of the forty years of his reign. To this may be added the good relations he was able to maintain for four decades with the central government in Chalcedonian Constantinople, in spite of his Monophysitism.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 110, line 103.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 100, line 69.

<sup>106</sup> Or at least conceding some worth to him, as he does to other "barbarian" figures, for whom see *ibid.*, 28.

<sup>107</sup> Except proleptically as in Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 240.

<sup>108</sup> See below, 340–41.

<sup>109</sup> The pre-Islamic poet Labīd mentions his death twice; see *BASIC II*.

<sup>110</sup> This will be discussed in detail in *BASIC II*.

While Theodora was alive he was absolutely safe, but good relations continued even after her death and until the very end of the reign of Justinian, that is, from 548 to 565. Relations also remained good with the new emperor and empress, Justin II and Sophia, for four years in spite of their return to the fold of Chalcedon and their turning their backs on Monophysitism, the confession of Arethas.<sup>111</sup>

2. He also appeared as a man of peace, which was seen in both 563 and 567. On the first date he appeared in Constantinople and reported some aggression against his territory on the part of the Lakhmid king, 'Amr. He had not cared to retaliate, although he was well capable of doing so, but only reported the misdemeanor of the Lakhmid king to Justinian. Even when this was repeated in 567, on behalf of 'Amr by Ḳābūs, nothing serious happened to ruffle the Byzantine-Persian relationship. Arethas had correctly read the Byzantine imperial mood after the Peace of 561 and scrupulously observed the treaty. He also appears in the Arabic sources as a man of peace on some occasions.<sup>112</sup> This is also reflected in the statement in John of Ephesus that refers to his death since he says that as long as he lived peace reigned between Lakhmid and Ghassānid, but as soon as he died the Lakhmids opened an offensive.<sup>113</sup>

3. Even in his old age he remained a redoubtable personality who maintained a strong presence wherever he went. The statement in John of Ephesus on the impression he left on the capital when he visited it in 563 is well known and has been discussed earlier.<sup>114</sup> The aggressive Lakhmids, who had been cowed by the smashing victory that Arethas had scored in 554, remained so in these six years, in spite of noises they made here and there. This is also clear in the statement in John of Ephesus mentioned above, which, among other things, reflected the impact of his powerful personality and the terror he struck in the hearts of aggressors—all was quiet until he died, and then war broke out again. Finally, the strength of his personality is evident from the fact that although Arethas was old, his designated successor, Munḍir, the fiery and mettlesome prince, remained idle for some six years, without daring to follow his instincts as an aggressive commander and to engage in warfare as long as his father lived. Immediately after Arethas' death, Munḍir celebrated his reign with a blitzkrieg against the Lakhmids, which reverberated far and wide, but which ultimately ruffled Ghassānid-Byzantine relations.

<sup>111</sup> Contrast with the reign of his successor, Munḍir, when these relations exploded quite early in the reign.

<sup>112</sup> As when he brought about peace between two subdivisions of the tribe of Ṭayy, al-Ghawth and Jadila; see *BASIC II*.

<sup>113</sup> See below, 340.

<sup>114</sup> See above, 287–88.

## X. THE ACCESSION OF MUNDIR, 569

With the death of Arethas in 569, his son Munder succeeded him in the kingship of Ghassān and the supreme phylarchate in Oriens. Munder was different from his father, Arethas, who had enjoyed a long and harmonious relationship with Justinian. In addition, Munder had to deal with an *autokrator* whose mental imbalance became evident in the early 570s and who became insane in 574. Tiberius was then chosen to be co-ruler with him until 578 when Justin II died and Tiberius became sole ruler. This divides the remaining years of Justin's reign, as far as Arab-Byzantine relations are concerned, into two parts: from 569 to 574 during which Justin II was sole ruler; and from 574 to 578 when Tiberius was co-ruler with Justin, but virtually the ruler of Byzantium. The two periods stand in contrast to each other, the first being a period of tension and estrangement between Munder and Justin, while the second was a period of détente during which Arab-Byzantine relations were restored to their former harmony.

The first period may be summarized as follows. Munder scores two victories over the Lakhmids of Persia in two successive years, 569 and 570. Apparently his victories, decisive as they were, turn out to be Pyrrhic victories: as a result, he asks for gold from Justin in order to retrieve his losses by recruiting troops. This enrages Justin who decides to have him removed and issues instructions to that effect to his *magister militum* in Oriens, Marcianus. The imperial plot against him is discovered by Munder who is enraged by this imperial treachery. He withdraws from the service of Byzantium for some three years, 572–575, during which the Lakhmids and the Persians ravage Oriens. Although Ghassānid-Byzantine relations were restored during the second period (574–578) when Tiberius was co-ruler, mistrust had been sown between the two parties, and it finally brought about the arrest and exile of Munder in the early 580s with disastrous consequences for Arab-Byzantine relations.

The sources for this period and indeed for the entire reign of Munder are fairly informative. The *lacunae* that plague the reign of every other Ghassānid king are very few and are easily fordable. The chief historian of the reign does not write in Greek but in Syriac, and he is John of Ephesus,<sup>115</sup> a contemporary

<sup>115</sup> The excellent Syriac edition and Latin version of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus have been published in CSCO and will be used here. For the Syriac edition, see *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, ed. E. W. Brooks, CSCO, Scriptores Syri 105, ser. 3, vol. 3 (Paris-Louvain, 1935–36). For the Latin version, translated by Brooks, see *ibid.*, no. 106. The English version of R. Payne Smith, *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus* (Oxford, 1860), is not without its use for the general reader but is very old and cannot be used for research; hence it is the Latin version that is used throughout, and reference to the Syriac text is made only when necessary. The Latin version will be referred to here as *HE*, followed by *textus* when the original Syriac is discussed. For a review of Brooks' text and



and primary source from whom all subsequent Syriac authors<sup>116</sup> borrow on the subject of the Ghassānids. The stirring and dramatic events of the reign, disclosed by John of Ephesus, are almost left unrecorded by the Greek historians.<sup>117</sup> Hence the critical study of the reign of Muṇḍir, to a large extent, consists in the analysis of the accounts of this primary and contemporary source, John of Ephesus,<sup>118</sup> who was privileged to be in Constantinople for a long time, who had access to archives, and who probably met Muṇḍir himself during the latter's stay in the capital.

## XI. THE LAKHMID-GHASSĀNID CONFLICT, 569–570

Accounts of this conflict have accidentally survived in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as a preface to John of Ephesus' account of the souring of relations between Justin II and Muṇḍir.<sup>119</sup> He had treated the conflict in greater detail earlier, in the part of the *HE* that is not extant, but he gave a resumé of it in this new context in order to demonstrate the extent of the enormity committed by Justin II toward Muṇḍir.<sup>120</sup> It is also clear from the account of John of Ephesus that he was presenting two campaigns and not two battles of one and the same campaign.<sup>121</sup>

### The First Campaign, 569

1. The Lakhmids contemplate a campaign against the Ghassānids as soon as they hear of the death of Arethas, thinking they would be an easy prey to them: "Cum enim Hārith rex Ṭayāye Romanorum, cuius formidine et timore multo omnes Ṭayāyē Persarum tenebantur, et, cum eum mortuum esse viderent, filiis eius omnibus et primoribus et exercitu contemptis et despectis, castra eius tota in manus eorum exinde iam tradita esse putaverunt."<sup>122</sup> This passage in John of Ephesus clearly reflects the military reputation of the Ghassānid phylarch which kept the Lakhmids in check. The last Lakhmid-Ghassānid encounter in which Arethas was involved was the battle of Chalcis

translation, see E. Honigmann, "L'histoire ecclésiastique de Jean d'Ephèse," *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 615–25.

<sup>116</sup> These will be drawn upon occasionally in the following discussion.

<sup>117</sup> However, these Greek sources are important for considering the charge of *prodosia* made against Muṇḍir later in his reign.

<sup>118</sup> On John of Ephesus, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 181–82. The fundamental work on John of Ephesus is still the old work of A. Dyakonov, *Ioann Efesskiy* (St. Petersburg, 1908), summarized by E. W. Brooks in *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, PO 17, Introduction, pp. III–xv.

<sup>119</sup> See *HE*, 212–13.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213, lines 27–28.

<sup>121</sup> For a treatment of this Lakhmid-Ghassānid war in Orientalist scholarship of almost a century ago, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 103.

<sup>122</sup> *HE*, p. 212, lines 20–25.

in 554 when the Lakhmid king himself fell. The new Lakhmid king, Ḳābūs,<sup>123</sup> and other Lakhmid generals most probably took part in that battle and so had a taste of Ghassānid military prowess.

More importantly this passage reveals the statesmanship of Arethas in imposing what might be termed a *Pax Ghassanica* in the Arabian desert and in the limitrophe, which was what Byzantium wanted. It is also clear that Arethas' military prestige had dwarfed that of his sons and commanders; while he was alive, they did not dare disturb the peace and so did not give the Lakhmids the chance to test them. Even the equally redoubtable Munḍir had to remain inactive during the disturbance of 567; hence the Lakhmids' contempt for his sons and commanders, and also the surprise that awaited them when Munḍir was at last free to strike after the death of his father.

2. The Lakhmids under their king, Ḳābūs, take the offensive and invade Ghassānid territory. On hearing this, Munḍir assembled his brothers, sons, commanders, and all his army, and then fell upon them suddenly and utterly defeated them.<sup>124</sup>

a. Noteworthy is the fact that John of Ephesus says that they invaded "Ghassānid territory."<sup>125</sup> This confirms the view presented above that the Ghassānids had a territory of their own outside the *limes* but close to it, in much the same way that the Lakhmids had a territory of their own. The Lakhmids apparently were aware of this distinction between Roman and Ghassānid territory, and in invading the latter they may have wanted to heed the clauses of the treaty of 561.

b. Remarkable is the statement that Munḍir collected his brothers and sons. This, too, confirms the conclusion stated earlier in this volume that the Ghassānid royal house fought as a family and all of them took part in the wars. That Munḍir had brothers is already known, but this is the first reference to his sons, one of whom, Nuʿmān, was to succeed him.

c. Although the prestige of Arethas had kept the Lakhmids in check while he was alive and made them disinclined to take offensive action against the Ghassānids, this could not have been the only reason for their inactivity during his lifetime and their action immediately after his death. The same years that witnessed the death of Arethas and the accession of his son, Munḍir, also witnessed the death of the Lakhmid king, ʿAmr, and the accession of the new king, Ḳābūs. The latter most probably took part in the disastrous

<sup>123</sup> For Ḳābūs see Rothstein, *DLH*, 102–5.

<sup>124</sup> *HE*, p. 212, lines 26–32.

<sup>125</sup> The expression "in terra tribus Hārith" recalls the Greek of Menander when speaking of the Lakhmid attack against Munḍir and his Ghassānid territory; on the Ghassānid see above, 312–14. It also recalls the Greek of Theophanes in his account of Arethas' journey to Constantinople in 563 to complain about the Lakhmid invasion "of his places." For the phrase εἰς τοὺς τόπους αὐτοῦ, see above, 286.

battle of Chalcis in 554 and, like all the Lakhmids, was smarting under the defeat that also took away his own father. He understandably wanted to celebrate his accession by a military action that would efface the ignominy of 554 and auspiciously inaugurate his own reign.

d. But he caught a Tartar. Munḍir initiated a new Ghassānid strategy, that of the lightning war which characterized all his campaigns. He attacked quickly and suddenly and with irresistible impetuosity,<sup>126</sup> as is clear from the accounts of the *HE*, which invariably uses terms that reflect this strategic concept.

3. Qābūs, the Lakhmid king, flees the battlefield on horseback, while Munḍir occupies his camp and takes possession of his tent (*praetorium*), his baggage, and herds of camels. He captures some of Qābūs' relatives and chiefs and puts others to the sword.<sup>127</sup> Munḍir thus won a decisive victory over Qābūs in their first encounter, and this victory marked the end of the first phase of the campaign of 569.

4. The second phase of the campaign of 569 opens when Munḍir, not satisfied with his victory over Qābūs on Ghassānid soil, crosses over to Lakhmid territory, marches deep into it, and pitches his tent at a spot some three *mansiones* from a celebrated Lakhmid locality, most probably their capital Ḥīra itself. Scouts of Qābūs, thinking the tent was that of their king, enter it only to be captured. After staying there as long as he pleased, Munḍir returned home to Ghassānid territory laden with booty.<sup>128</sup>

a. The first striking feature of the second phase is Munḍir's carrying the campaign into enemy territory. He was not satisfied with his complete victory over Qābūs on Ghassānid soil but wanted to teach his adversary a lesson and impress upon him that he did not fear him but on the contrary had such contempt for him that he was fighting him in his own backyard. This reveals another feature of Munḍir's strategy and the new style he was bringing into the Lakhmid-Ghassānid conflict, that of the aggressive commander who believes in the strategy of the overkill.<sup>129</sup>

b. One problem is presented by the identity of the locality at which he pitched his tent, three *mansiones* distant from Ḥīra. Nöldeke is most probably

<sup>126</sup> Brooks translates Syriac *ḥarbā* literally as *gladius*, "sword," while I am inclined to translate it as "war," which it can also mean. The sword was Munḍir's principal weapon, but it does not seem natural that the sword is involved here since the term also governs in the genitive not only Munḍir but also his army. For the Syriac see *HE*, textus, p. 280, line 29; for the Latin version, *HE*, p. 212, line 33: "vim gladii Mundir et exercitus eius."

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212, line 32 – p. 213, line 6.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213, lines 6–17.

<sup>129</sup> Brooks translated Syriac *'bar* (*HE*, textus, p. 281, line 4) as "transgressus" and correctly footnoted "Sc. fines vel flumen"; *HE*, p. 213, line 7 note 2. If the second alternative is the correct one, Munḍir must have crossed the Euphrates.

correct in suggesting that this is none other than 'Ayn Ubāgh, a famous *yawm*, a battle-day, between Ghassān and Lakhm.<sup>130</sup> Its distance from Ḥīra answers to the geographical location of 'Ayn Ubāgh. In support of this identification, one could add that since Munḍir pitched his tent in that spot, there must have been a spring of water there, which is what 'Ayn in 'Ayn Ubāgh means. Nöldeke is also most probably correct in identifying the other locality as Ḥīra. The *HE* refers to it as a place "qua greges omnes et splendor totus Ṭayāyae Persarum ibi erat."<sup>131</sup> There is no other place that answers better to his description than Ḥīra itself with its palaces, castles, churches, and monasteries about which John of Ephesus no doubt heard.

c. The second phase of the campaign reveals two more of Munḍir's qualities as a soldier. One who penetrates so deeply into enemy territory can only have been well informed about the geography of that area. This he must have acquired while he was "warden of the marches" in the six years or so that elapsed from his appointment as Arethas' successor in 563 until the death of his father in 569. Since he was prevented from engaging in military action against the Lakhmids during his father's lifetime, he could only engage in such activities as prepared him for taking over when his father died, and one of them was a thorough study of the terrain and the territories that lay between Ghassān and Lakhm and which were to become their future battlefields. Another aspect of his generalship revealed by this phase is his wiliness as a tactician. He kept his adversary's tent, used it as his own, and in so doing lured the enemy troops to enter it and make fools of themselves. Finally, he resisted the temptation of carrying the war into Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, although he was only three *mansiones* away from it. Thus he showed that, although he was an aggressive commander, he knew where and when to stop, short of temerity. But when the right time came, he would occupy Ḥīra and set it on fire.

#### The Second Campaign, 570

After some time had elapsed, which must have been less than a year, Ḳābūs returned to the offensive in order to retrieve his losses and defeat of 569.

1. He sends a message to Munḍir to meet him in battle openly and not steal victories as a thief as he had done in the previous year: "Accipe pugnam, quod en contra te venimus. Quamquam enim tu sicut latro nobis incidisti, et te nos vicisse putas, en nos aperte in pugna contra te venimus."<sup>132</sup> Ḳābūs'

<sup>130</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 23–24 and also p. 19 note 2. Rothstein accepts this identification but with caution; see *DLH*, 103.

<sup>131</sup> *HE*, p. 213, lines 8–9.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213, lines 19–22.

message fully indicates that even after the first bloody encounter, he had not yet grasped that a new style of warfare had now been introduced by Muḍīr, that of the blitzkrieg, with all its attendant features, which was to characterize all the wars of Muḍīr. He naively equated the lightning attack with *latrocinium*,<sup>133</sup> thus completely misunderstanding the new Ghassānid strategy.

2. Muḍīr sends back a laconic message asking Ḳābūs not to take the trouble of coming to him, as he is himself on his way to meet him: "Quare vos vexamini? Ego venio!"<sup>134</sup> The two messages are revelatory of the two commanders: the former of Ḳābūs' lack of comprehension of the nature of his adversary, the latter of Muḍīr's new style of warfare.

As in the previous campaign, Muḍīr falls on the Lakhmid host suddenly, in the desert before they reach him, and utterly defeats them and puts them to flight: "Et obsecundavit et se paravit et cum verbo opus fecit; eisque subito in deserto obviam ivit, cum non exspectarent; eisque incidit eosque conturbavit, et eorum magnam partem trucidavit; et iterum ante eum fugerunt."<sup>135</sup> In so doing, Muḍīr repeated the tactics he had employed in the previous engagement: offensive action, speed, suddenness, and impetuosity. He met Ḳābūs in the desert, again testimony to his intimate knowledge of the geography and topography of the area essential for desert warfare. Perhaps he also meant to fight not on Roman territory, lest he should be held accountable for breaking one of the provisions of the peace treaty of 561 that pertained to the Arab allies of Byzantium and Persia.

3. Was this campaign the second battle of one and the same war<sup>136</sup> or was it a second campaign, distinct from the first which took place in 569? Both views are possible, but it is more likely that the latter alternative is the valid one. The evidence from the *HE* and another Syriac source suggests that these battles represent two different campaigns, the first fought in 569 and the second the following year. The idiom of the *HE* suggests this, since John of Ephesus speaks of "duabus pugnis"<sup>137</sup> when referring to the victories of Muḍīr; the Syriac term *qrābā* sounds more like "war" than "battle," although it can mean both.

<sup>133</sup> He must also have had in mind the ruse that Muḍīr employed to capture his scouts and his men, when he used Ḳābūs' tent as his own, thus luring the latter's troops into his trap.

<sup>134</sup> *HE*, p. 213, line 23. In its laconic style, it recalls Caesar's famous message to the Senate, although that was couched in the past tense.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213, lines 24–27.

<sup>136</sup> As understood by Nöldeke, who speaks not of *Krieg* but of *Schlacht* in *GF*, 23, and is practically followed by Rothstein, *DLH*, 103. Nöldeke erroneously identified the first of the two engagements mentioned by the *HE* with the one recorded in the *Chronicon Maroniticum* (below, note 138) for the year 570.

<sup>137</sup> *HE*, textus, p. 281, line 31.

More decisive and informative is the testimony of that valuable Syriac chronicle called the *Chronicon Maroniticum*, which also gives the exact date of this second campaign, Ascension Day, May 570. In the Latin version of the *Chronicon*, the statement reads: "Et feria quinta Ascensionis huius anni proelium iniit Mundar."<sup>138</sup> The *Chronicon* is here recounting the events of the year 881 of the Seleucid Era, that is, A.D. 570. The year 570 clearly suggests a second campaign, since the first was fought *immediately* after the death of Arethas and that happened in 569. The *Chronicon* is extremely reliable since on the same page it accurately records the death of Mundir the Lakhmid, in June 554. It is thus a valuable addition to what the *HE* says on the campaign, in that it dates it accurately. The *HE* must also have done so in the portion in which the two campaigns are described in detail, which is not extant.

It is a small matter whether these were two campaigns or two battles of the same one. The important point is that the Lakhmid-Ghassānid front was operational during these two years, 569–570:

4. Even more important than the chronological precision that informs the statement in the *Chronicon Maroniticum* (p. 111, line 15) is the short description of the battle: "et auxiliatus est Dominus Mundaro, et devicit Qabus et crux triumphavit." This statement, noble in its simplicity, tells much about the war that Mundir waged and the Ghassānid war effort. This was the image of Mundir in the consciousness of the Christian Semitic Orient, the soldier of the Cross whose victories were aided by the Lord and were a triumph for Christianity, especially as he was fighting pagan Lakhmids and fire-worshipping Persians. The fact that the victory was recorded in the Syriac *Chronicon*, which is selective and also mentions the other great Ghassānid victory in 554, suggests that news of the resounding victory spread in the region and was hailed by the Christian church of the Orient, principally Monophysite, as a victory of Christianity and of Monophysitism. Most probably a thanksgiving service was held in the Monophysite churches of Oriens to celebrate the victory, especially as this took place on an important date in the Christian calendar, Ascension Day. Hence knowledge of it must have been prevalent in Oriens, and so it was recorded in local histories or church histories, whence the *Chronicon* derived it.

5. The two campaigns were the subject of two dispatches that Mundir sent to Justin, the first of which is pertinent in this connection. In the Latin

<sup>138</sup> See *Chronicon Maroniticum*, trans. J. B. Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, pars secunda, Scriptores Syri, 3rd. ser., vol. 4, CSCO, p. 111, lines 14–15. Parenthetically, it may be noted that Rothstein translated the Syriac more accurately, when he spoke of a war and not of a battle: "führte Mundar Krieg"; *DLH*, 103. Since the engagement took place in May, the campaign was what is called in the Arabic sources a *raba' iyya*, a spring campaign.



version of the *HE*, John of Ephesus speaks as follows of Muḍīr's letter to Justin: "de omnibus quae effecit ei scripsit, et de tota sua."<sup>139</sup> This is clearly a victory bulletin, the first reference to such in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. It confirms what has been said earlier in this volume on the victory bulletin that Arethas must have sent in 554 after his victory over the Lakhmid Muḍīr. It is noteworthy that the Ghassānid Muḍīr writes directly to the emperor without the mediation of the authorities in Oriens. This may reflect the rising importance and independence of the Ghassānid king and supreme phylarch and the recent changes in provincial administration of Oriens, including abolition of the office of the *comes Orientis* during the reign of Justinian.<sup>140</sup> The language of the dispatch is of some interest. As will be noted in discussing the second of Muḍīr's two dispatches, it is quite likely that he wrote it in either of the two imperial languages, Latin or Greek.

## XII. THE SOURING OF GHASSĀNID-BYZANTINE RELATIONS

Muḍīr wrote Justin a second letter which was more important historically than the first, the victory bulletin.<sup>141</sup> In addition to its being more informative on the battle with Ḳābūs, it was the document that irritated Justin, caused the rift between lord and vassal, and placed Ghassānid-Byzantine relations on a collision course, which is the theme of this chapter.

According to the *HE* (p. 213, line 34–p. 214, line 1), Muḍīr asked the emperor for gold so that he might recruit more troops, since he was sure that the Lakhmids after their defeat would regroup and attack him: "et post haec, eos certe rursus in eum conventuros opinatus, ei scripsit ut aurum ei mitteret quo exercitum sibi conduceret." Muḍīr was a responsible commander and would not have made the request unless he thought it was justified. The conclusion that may be drawn from this request is that the encounter with the Lakhmids, although a resounding victory for Muḍīr, was a bloody one in which the Ghassānids also lost heavily. This is consonant with the antecedents and the attendant circumstances of this second encounter. Ḳābūs had suffered a first crushing defeat which he had hoped would be a resounding victory for inaugurating his reign. So he must have spent the interval between the two encounters recruiting troops, regrouping and mobilizing all that he could of the tribes of northeastern Arabia which were allied to his house, such as the

<sup>139</sup> See *HE*, p. 213, lines 33–34.

<sup>140</sup> On this see Bury, *HLRE* (1889 ed.), II, 75.

<sup>141</sup> It is not entirely clear from the language of John of Ephesus whether Muḍīr wrote two letters or one letter in two parts, of which his request for gold formed the second part. The sentence in *HE*, p. 213, lines 33–35, could suggest either, but whichever it is, it mostly pertains to the second campaign of 570. The first campaign may have been mentioned in the detailed account in the *HE*, now lost, or it may have been included in this letter, announcing the second victory and the request.

powerful Tamīm and Bakr.<sup>142</sup> Mundir beat him with his superior generalship, but there is no doubt that he, too, must have suffered heavy losses in both men and horses. In other words, he won a Pyrrhic victory. This is the only explanation for his urgent request for more gold than was allotted to him as an ally, who received the *annona foederatica*.<sup>143</sup> All this may have been explained in the fuller text of the letter which has not survived and which must have been quoted more fully in the more copious accounts that formed part of the non-extant portion of the *HE*, but which can be recovered from a close examination of Mundir's request.

Another explanation, provided by a later Syriac source, may be added for understanding the request, and it probably derives from the lost portion of the *HE*. Bar-Hebraeus says: "And Kaboz attacked him again, and was defeated, and went to the Persians to bring reinforcements. Then Mundir informed King Justinus (of this) and demanded of him gold to give to the troops so that he might stand up against the Persians."<sup>144</sup> This is a very plausible explanation for Mundir's request. It is reasonable to suppose that after suffering a crushing defeat, Kābūs, the Arab client-king of Persia, went to his overlord for help since he, too, was the "warden of the marches" for Persia against Ghassān and Byzantium. If Mundir requested gold in order to recruit more troops, he was doing so in the anticipation of a joint Lakhmid-Persian offensive against Roman territory and hence could claim proportionate aid from Byzantium for his losses in the defense of the *limes*.

### A

More important than the contents of the letter or the request are its effect on Justin and the dire consequences that followed for Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. The reaction of the emperor, especially after news of the victories of his allies, was startling and even more so was his decision to dispose of Mundir: "Quod cum Iustinus rex audivisset, eum idcirco et scripsisse ut au-

<sup>142</sup> Bakr more than Taghlib may be mentioned in this connection. The two sister tribes had engaged in an internecine fratricidal war when the Lakhmid king, either Mundir or his son ʿAmr, reconciled them. Later the chief of Taghlib killed the Lakhmid king himself, ʿAmr, in 570. The services of Bakr to the cause of the Lakhmids are eloquently enumerated in the *Muʿallaqa* of the Bākritē poet, al-Ḥārith, for which see Rothstein, *DLH*, 100–102.

<sup>143</sup> Presumably Mundir was not thinking of any Arabs in Oriens but of tribes living outside the *limes* in northern Arabia, since these were paid the *annona foederatica* already. He probably had in mind Arab warrior tribes in north Arabia that lived outside the *limes* but who were friendly and whom he could enlist with the lure of Byzantine gold in the war effort against Kābūs, as a temporary measure in anticipation of the latter's expected counterattack.

<sup>144</sup> See Bar-Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abu'l Faraj*, trans. E. A. W. Budge (Oxford, 1932), I, 79–80; see also Michel le Syrien, *Chronique*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1901), II, 308. Bar-Hebraeus' version is more informative, since it goes on to explain the reasons why Justin decided to dispose of Mundir. Both Syriac authors most probably derive their data from lost portions of the *HE*.

rum ei mitteret, valde iratus et stomachatus eum probris lacessivit eique graviter minatus est; et ut eum dolo clanculum occideret enisus est."<sup>145</sup> Two elements in the emperor's reaction must be distinguished from each other: his anger and his decision to kill Munḍir. The first is readily understandable, coming as it did from an emperor who reversed Justinian's policy, especially in foreign affairs. The following points illustrate the two conflicting views of this affair—the view from Constantinople and that from Jābiya in Gaulanitis.

1. The request for gold, or more gold, must have been particularly distasteful to Justin who celebrated his accession and the first years of his reign by denying barbarians and allies the subsidies they had received from his uncle Justinian. The pages of Menander provide an eloquent commentary on how the emperor felt about these requests and his often unbelievably rude replies to envoys who made them.<sup>146</sup> Munḍir was, of course, not exactly to be classed within these categories of barbarians, since he was an officer in the Byzantine army and his troops were in charge of the defense of Oriens. Nevertheless, there is a certain degree of fairness in Justin's reaction and non-receptiveness to such requests.

2. Then there was the status of the Lakhmid-Ghassānid conflict that occasioned Munḍir's request. Justin could view it as an inter-Arab war that did not concern Byzantium, especially as it was fought on Ghassānid and Lakhmid territory, not Roman. Hence he would have viewed the request as alien to imperial concerns. In this, of course, he was not correct since the Ghassānid-Lakhmid war, as has been pointed out earlier in this volume, was not entirely inter-Arab, but concerned the two empires directly. This is confirmed by the sequel to Justin's quarrel with Munḍir. Not only the Lakhmids but also the Persians attacked Roman territory as far as Antioch after they had heard that Munḍir had withdrawn from the service of Byzantium.

3. Finally, Justin may have considered that Munḍir went beyond reasonable bounds in dealing with the Lakhmids. His reaction was overdone and his victory a gratuitous overkill. He may have remembered the first six years of Munḍir's shared rule with Arethas; in spite of Lakhmid provocations, Arethas did not condescend to react and was able to control the situation and maintain the peace with no requests from the imperial treasury for further outlays.

4. Finally, there was the peace treaty of 561, which expressly stipulated that neither ally of the two powers was to engage in military action against the other. In responding militarily to Ḳābūs' threat, Munḍir, from Justin's point of view and that of Constantinople, was violating one of the clauses of the treaty and perhaps involving the empire in a war with Persia.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>145</sup> *HE*, p. 214, lines 1–4.

<sup>146</sup> Blockley, *Menander*, 111.

<sup>147</sup> In the *Chronicum Syriacum* of Bar-Hebraeus (*Chronography*, above, note 144), this is explicitly stated in connection with Justin's decision to have Munḍir killed: "Then Justinus

The foregoing considerations are theoretically defensible but do not take into account the realities of Lakhmid-Ghassānid relations and the status of the Ghassānids as Byzantium's allies and watchmen of the oriental *limes*. Muḍir was a responsible "warden of the marches" for Byzantium and a loyal vassal, but the days of Justinian—and Justinian's understanding—had gone, and Muḍir's lord was the wrong one. And "there arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph."

Incomprehensible is the other element in Justin's reaction—his decision to have Muḍir murdered. It is true that Justin was infuriated by the latter's request for gold, but the matter could have rested there with refusal to accede to the request. It is also true that Justin was unbalanced, even before 574 when he was declared patently insane and when Tiberius was elected co-ruler with him. Even so, the decision to kill a trusted ally, especially after his scoring some resounding victories in defense of Oriens, remains extraordinary and justifies probing into the mystery of his decision. It will be argued that this was most probably done at the instigation of those at his court in Constantinople who were antipathetic to the Ghassānids both as barbarian Saracens and as heretical Monophysites, more probably the latter.

That Chalcedonian Constantinople was always anti-Ghassānid because of their Monophysitism is well known since the Ghassānids were viewed as the military power behind the Monophysite church in Oriens. During the reign of Justinian, the Ghassānids had the protection of Theodora and her understanding husband. But now the situation changed, and the 570s witnessed imperial legislation that was disadvantageous to the Monophysites, including their active persecution in 572.<sup>148</sup> Now these victories in Oriens, won by Muḍir, were construed by the Chalcedonian party in Constantinople as victories for the Monophysite church. Moreover, as the quotation from the *Chronicon Maroniticum* indicates, the second victory against the Lakhmids was scored on Ascension Day, May 570. It is practically certain that the zealous soldier of the Cross, Muḍir, would not have omitted to refer to this happy coincidence in his victory bulletin to Justin, the ex-Monophysite, but now the Chalcedonian emperor. This would only have added fuel to the Chalcedonian fire and exacerbated relations.

This conclusion could receive considerable confirmation from the sequel to the abortive attempt to murder Muḍir. In the second period that followed the failure of the plot, Justin denied being privy to the plot and kept maintaining that orders to kill Muḍir were written without his knowledge. Justin

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determined to kill Mundar as if he had been the cause of the Persians invading the land of the Rhomāyē"; *ibid.*, 80. Complaints by the two powers about Arab wars and raids—that the wars of their respective *foederati* violated their territory, broke peace treaties, and crossed into imperial territories—were voiced in 576 during peace negotiations.

<sup>148</sup> This is treated in detail in *BASIC* I.2.

also tried to reconcile Mundir through many letters he sent him, and finally, when the reconciliation took place, Justin greatly rejoiced.<sup>149</sup> One would be inclined to believe this protestation of Justin to be true, in view of what is known about his character (unbalanced as he was and as insane as he became), and about the state of animosity that inspired the Chalcedonians against the Monophysites.

It is therefore perfectly possible that the plot was the work of some conspirators<sup>150</sup> at the palace who either concocted it without Justin's knowledge or took advantage of the king's angry reaction to Mundir's request for gold in order to alienate Justin completely from Mundir and suggest a violent course of action against him.

## B

Although an explanation has been attempted for the curious reaction of Justin to Mundir's dispatch, which soured relations between the two, that reaction remains something of a puzzle, directed as it was against a tested and trusted *foederatus*. It is, therefore, necessary to explore another dimension of this problem which involves Gregory, the patriarch of Antioch at the time. An examination of the career of Gregory as it is presented by his protégé and employee, Evagrius, makes almost certain that the patriarch was involved in the plot to dispose of Mundir. Gregory was involved in the second plot against Mundir, the one that ended in his capture and exile. The chances are that the patriarch was not entirely innocent of complicity in the first plot of 572.<sup>151</sup>

Gregory was a powerful and influential prelate who controlled the fortunes of his patriarchate for some twenty-three years, having succeeded to the see in 569/70, the same year that Mundir succeeded to the supreme phylarchate of Oriens. Evagrius has left a vivid picture of his personality<sup>152</sup> as well as

<sup>149</sup> *HE*, p. 216, lines 9–11; p. 217, lines 5–8.

<sup>150</sup> Stein's suggestion that there was a Chalcedonian faction among the Ghassānids that plotted against him cannot be accepted; E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 1919), 42. That some of the Ghassānids were, or may have been, inclined toward the Chalcedonian position is attested in the sources (Nöldeke, *GF*, 27), but that they would have plotted against him is inconceivable; the Ghassānids were united by ties of family loyalty. Whatever sentiments some of them may have had, these could not have moved them to intrigue from their base in Oriens against their king in Constantinople. If there had been such a plot, John of Ephesus would have recorded it; he was very well informed about the Ghassānid house and devoted an entire chapter, now lost, to its history.

<sup>151</sup> For this second plot, see below, 457–63.

<sup>152</sup> Evagrius is the main primary source for the secular activities of Gregory since he was his employee; see *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898) (hereafter *Evagrius, HE*); for his glowing delineation of Gregory's character, see *ibid.*, 201–3. For an entirely different and very dim view of the patriarch, see John of Ephesus, who describes his

many significant data on his career. Gregory appears interested in secular as well as ecclesiastical affairs in Oriens. His involvement in the former is well brought out in an excellent study of Evagrius:

With the continuing decline of local government, bishops and patriarchs were becoming both patrons and representatives of law and order. Thus Gregory had attached to himself by patronage the bishop of Nisibis and troops from the Byzantine armies. He was delegated by Maurice to win over rebellious troops, to escort Chosroes through Byzantine territory back to Persia, and as representative of the imperial government to consecrate the crosses which the Persian king had sent to Sergiopolis. The important civic and state functions of the patriarch were reflected in the work of his legal advisers. Evagrius travelled with Gregory in 587–8 to Constantinople to defend him before a secular and ecclesiastical court against charges to which the patriarch's civic responsibilities had laid him open. John of Epiphania was seconded to a diplomatic mission to Persia.<sup>153</sup>

It is difficult to believe that one who was so extensively involved in the secular affairs of the empire in Oriens would have kept aloof from the fortunes of Mundir and the plot that was contrived against him in Oriens. A closer examination of his background and his function as the patriarch of Antioch confirms the conclusion that he had special interest in the fortunes of the Ghassānids and Mundir and shows his antipathies toward the Ghassānids both as Arabs and as Monophysites.

a. Most probably Gregory was a Roman. His Roman name is not decisive since the name was assumed by non-Romans, but the Roman sentiments he expressed while addressing the mutinous troops of Philippicus suggest that he was.<sup>154</sup> The Romans could not but view peoples such as the Germans and the Arabs except as "barbarians," and unreliable ones at that. If Gregory was a Roman, which he probably was, he must have shared the prejudices of the Romans against the barbarians, including the Arabs.

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participation in sacrifices to Jupiter and his trial in Constantinople: *HE*, 116–18 and 202–3. If the patriarch was accused of incestuous relations with his sister and of being an atheist sacrificing to Jupiter, he was not above plotting for the removal or assassination of Mundir. However, he won his case in Constantinople against his accusers.

<sup>153</sup> See Pauline Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus, the Church Historian* (Louvain, 1981), 3.

<sup>154</sup> Pauline Allen denies that the speech was really given by Gregory and says that it was concocted by Evagrius as a rhetorician. It is perfectly possible that Evagrius employed his rhetorical skill in its composition, but unlikely that Gregory did not deliver a word of it; see Allen, *Evagrius*, 254–55. Evagrius, as will be seen later in this volume, was not above *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*, but it is difficult to believe that he concocted the speech *in its entirety* and put it in the mouth of the patriarch of Antioch, his patron, if it had no basis in fact. For the speech of Evagrius, see *ibid.*, 229–31.



b. Gregory began his ecclesiastical career as the superior of the "monastery of the Byzantines" in Palestine.<sup>155</sup> But, as is well known, the monastic establishment in Palestine suffered from Saracen incursions throughout the Byzantine period. This is likely to have alienated him against the Saracens as it had done Jerome and other churchmen and ecclesiastical writers who wrote on Palestine.

c. After spending time at the monastery in Palestine, Gregory became head of the monastery of Mount Sinai.<sup>156</sup> During his hegoumenate there, the Scenite Saracens attacked the monastery and laid siege to it, thus exposing him to extreme danger.

This was Gregory's background before he ascended the throne of Antioch—unfortunate encounters with the Arabs as Saracens. In addition to antipathies against the Arabs for these reasons, Gregory had other reasons, as the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch.

a. In the eyes of the orthodox Chalcedonian ecclesiastics, the Arabs were heretical Monophysites, especially the Ghassānids. Even from his Palestinian days he would have been aware of this. Palestine was solidly orthodox, and the Ghassānids were unpopular among Palestinian hagiographic writers such as Cyril of Scythopolis. Gregory lived in this atmosphere of anti-Ghassānid sentiments.<sup>157</sup>

b. Furthermore, as the patriarch of Antioch, he had ample reasons to be anti-Ghassānid. Oriens was virtually coterminous with the Patriarchate of Antioch, and in Oriens the Monophysite movement thrived. Although it was condemned by all the orthodox patriarchs of Christendom, it was especially irritating to the patriarch of Antioch, within whose jurisdiction Syrian Monophysitism flourished; and one of its great figures, Severus, was his predecessor in Antioch itself.

c. Gregory was aware of the role of the Ghassānid royal house in the resuscitation of the movement during the reign of Arethas, the father of Mundir, and the contributions of the former to its welfare.

d. Moreover, it was Arethas who, during his stay in Constantinople in 563, worked zealously for the appointment of a rival to the orthodox Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, namely, Paul the Black (564–583),<sup>158</sup> who for some twenty years was the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, a thorn in Gregory's side and his rival, to whom the Monophysites of Oriens looked as their spiritual leader, and not to Gregory.

<sup>155</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 202, line 2; see Allen, *Evagrius*, 217–18, for more data from John Moschus in his *Pratum Spirituale* on Gregory at the monastery of Pharan in Palestine.

<sup>156</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 202, lines 3–6.

<sup>157</sup> On this see above, 255.

<sup>158</sup> On this see *BASIC* I.2, 782–88. Furthermore, during the troubles that attended his patriarchate, Paul took refuge with the Ghassānids, both the father, Arethas, and the son, Mundir.

e. As for Arethas' son Mundir, he, too, was very active in ecclesiastical matters. He celebrated the inception of his reign by presiding over a conference of Monophysite clerics in 569–70, which affirmed its adherence to the strictly Severan theological position against the Tritheistic doctrines of Eugenius and Conon.<sup>159</sup> From the point of view of Gregory, this was a heretical council that challenged his authority as the rightful Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, and the Ghassānid king, Mundir, who presided over it, could not but be *persona non grata* with him.

Finally, Gregory's relations with Justin, who issued the warrant of death against Mundir, were quite close. It was Justin who appointed Gregory to be superior of the monastery of Mount Sinai, and it was Justin again who made possible the elevation of Gregory to the patriarchal see of Antioch by the ejection of his predecessor, Anastasius.<sup>160</sup> Contacts between Justin and Gregory must have remained active and frequent, in view of the increasing role the patriarch played in the secular and ecclesiastical policy of the reign with special reference to the Monophysites. This is confirmed by what happened during the Roman siege of Nisibis in 573, when Gregory passed on to Justin what the bishop of Nisibis had relayed to him.<sup>161</sup> It must also be remembered that Justin was on bad terms with the previous patriarch of Antioch, Anastasius, who did not care for Justin and referred to him as "the universal pest."<sup>162</sup> Justin finally ejected Anastasius from Antioch and had Gregory appointed. It is natural to suppose that the emperor was and remained in touch with his new patriarch, who had his support.

These arguments suggest that Gregory was deeply concerned with the career of Mundir, to whom he was antipathetic on many grounds. Both of them began their careers as king and patriarch<sup>163</sup> respectively in 569/70. In the two or three years that elapsed from 569, Gregory would have heard of Mundir's activities as a Monophysite and as a phylarch. He could not have remained indifferent to the fact that "the knight in shining armor" that was scoring victories for the Christian Roman Empire was an Ishmaelite Saracen and a heretical Monophysite at that, an adherent and arch leader of a movement Gregory was dedicated to eradicating from the ecclesiastical map of Oriens as the foremost priority of his patriarchate. It is, therefore, impossible that he was not involved in the plot to dispose of Mundir in 572, as he was to be a few years later, during the reign of Tiberius. One of his predecessors as

<sup>159</sup> On this see *BASIC* I.2, 811, 822–24, 831.

<sup>160</sup> See above, note 156.

<sup>161</sup> See Evagrius, *HE*, 204–5.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 201. Anastasius ascended the patriarchal throne in 561.

<sup>163</sup> On the establishment of the date 569/70 as the inception of Gregory's patriarchate, see Allen, *Evagrius*, 218.

patriarch of Antioch, Ephraim, tried to wipe out Monophysitism in various ways, one of which was the attempted conversion of Arethas, Mundir's father, to the Chalcedonian position, but failed miserably.<sup>164</sup> Apparently Gregory thought the most efficacious way of combating Monophysitism was to remove the Ghassānid phylarch from the scene completely.

It has been necessary to devote an entire section to the elucidation of the involvement of Gregory in the first plot against Mundir, since this contributes substantially to the understanding of the second plot and the secret of its success.<sup>165</sup> It also contributes to a better evaluation of Evagrius by the intensive examination of his attitude to the Ghassānid Arabs.

### C

The implementation of Justin's plot to have Mundir killed took the form of two letters, one to Mundir himself and the other to Marcianus, the newly appointed patrician *magister militum* in Oriens. In the former he asked Mundir to report to Marcianus in order that he might discuss with him important matters of state; in the latter, in which he included the contents of the former, he ordered Marcianus to assassinate or dispose of Mundir immediately. As it turned out, through a mistake by some incompetent functionary in the chancery, the two letters were interchanged and Mundir received the one that should have been sent to Marcianus. This was the cause of the rift between the Ghassānids and Byzantium which resulted in the withdrawal of Mundir from the service of the empire for some three years. Before discussing the ruffled course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, it is well that the farce of the two letters be discussed.

a. The *HE* has preserved the letter that Mundir received, the longer one that contained the contents of both: "En ad Mondir ṭayāyā scripsi ut ad te veniat. Fac, simul ut advenerit, caput eius sine mora amputes, et nobis scribe. Ad Mondir autem scripsi, 'Quoniam negotia quaedam *rerum* necessarium Marciano patricio scripsi ut tibi loquatur, statim sine mora ad eum i, et de negotio colloquimini.'" <sup>166</sup> The letter fully reflects the image of the Monophysite Saracen at the Byzantine court of Chalcedonian Constantinople. Although he was by now king, supreme phylarch, and *patricius*, he is stripped of

<sup>164</sup> On this see *BASIC* I.2, 746–55.

<sup>165</sup> Magnus was heavily involved in the second plot, even more than Gregory. He appears in Oriens in 573 at the head of an army detailed from Mesopotamia to Syria in order to meet that of Adarmanes (Adarmahan), the Persian commander, by whom he was soundly trounced. This of course took place after 572 when Mundir discovered the plot against him, but his defeat may have embittered him against Mundir since the secession of the latter contributed to the Roman defeats, one of which was sustained by Magnus. On the defeat of the latter, see Evagrius, *HE*, 206–7. On Magnus' involvement in the second plot, see below, 455–62.

<sup>166</sup> See *HE*, p. 214, lines 8–13.

all these titles and ranks and referred to dismissively and derogatorily as "Mundir the Saracen."<sup>167</sup> By contrast Marcianus is referred to as *patricius*. No doubt in the letter that should have reached Mundir, he would have been referred to by all the honorific titles with which he had been endowed. The choice of Marcianus was clever and natural and would not have aroused the phylarch's suspicion. He was a *patricius*, like himself, and moreover was his ultimate military superior in Oriens, since he was the *magister militum per Orientem* whose position must have become even more prominent after the abolition of the office of *comitia Orientis*.

b. The exchange of letters between Mundir and Justin is noteworthy. As has been pointed out in the discussion of Mundir's victory bulletin, it implied a certain amount of independence in the status of Mundir which makes it superfluous for him to send his dispatch through the mediation of the *magister militum* in Antioch, and the same fact is reflected in the emperor's dispatch directly to him without the mediation of the *magister*.

c. Furthermore, the exchange sheds some light on the question of Mundir's literacy. Justin's letter to Mundir (which never reached him) may conceivably have been written in Arabic, translated into that language at the office of the *magister officiorum* or at the *scrinium barbarorum*, if it existed at this time. But Justin's letter to Marcianus could have been written only in Latin or Greek, probably the latter. The clear implication of the idiom of the *HE* in using the term "read"<sup>168</sup> is that Mundir read it himself, and so Mundir may be said to have known Greek or Latin, probably both, as would be expected from such a high functionary in the service of Byzantium, and as may be inferred from an examination of what he said and did in Constantinople later in the decade after his reconciliation. Later on, in his account, John of Ephesus mentions that Mundir sent Justin's letter in all directions and showed it to everyone.<sup>169</sup> He must have had a translation made into Arabic and Syriac so that those in Oriens who could not read Greek or Latin would be able to read it.

d. Sending Justin's letter in all directions was of course necessary from the viewpoint of Mundir. Various Arab groups, Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, among the *foederati* in Oriens were entitled to know why their chief had left the service of Byzantium. The Syriac-speaking population of Oriens, especially the Monophysites among them, must also have been anxious to know why the military power behind their confession had defected. As an Arab, too, Mundir had to do it. What Justin did was *ghadr* in the perception of the Arabs, treacherous infidelity, a vice especially hideous among the pre-Islamic

<sup>167</sup> This may serve as some evidence that Mundir was not a *Rhomaioi* and continued to be a non-citizen, a *foederatus*, unless *civitas* was later extended to him as an honor.

<sup>168</sup> *HE*, p. 214, line 24; textus, p. 238, line 2.

<sup>169</sup> *HE*, p. 215, line 31.

Arabs who used to light fires on mountaintops to advertise the *ghadr* of someone.<sup>170</sup> Mundir was anxious that the world know who it was who perpetrated the *ghadr* since his own defection could have been construed as such by those who were not informed, and all the more so since his good faith with the Romans had been recently affirmed by a *foedus* on his accession in 569.

e. The date of Justin's letter is important since it makes it possible to give the correct chronology of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in this decade. John of Ephesus does not state precisely when this letter was written, but the reference to Marcianus allows it to be dated with tolerable precision. He was appointed *magister militum per Orientem* in 572 and arrived in Osrhoene late in the summer of that year, as is stated by John of Epiphania, presumably sometime in August.<sup>171</sup> So this provides a terminus post quem for the letter of Justin to Mundir. It is, therefore, quite likely that it was sent in the autumn of 572, soon after the arrival of Marcianus, since nothing of importance on the eastern front took place in that summer except for the incursion of three thousand Byzantine soldiers into Arzanene. It was in 573 that the more important operations against Persia took place. The autumn of 572 was thus the most natural and logical time for Justin's letter to reach Mundir as the *magister* did not have much on his hands then. His arrival to prosecute the war against Persia would also have been a good excuse for asking Mundir to have a conference with him. The latter, in his capacity as supreme phylarch of the *foederati*, would have been expected to take part in the contemplated war against Persia, as his father had done in the two Persian wars of Justinian's reign. Justin could, therefore, without arousing Mundir's suspicions, have asked him to confer with his *magister* for coordinating military action against the Persians. In view of all this, the autumn of 572 may be taken as the time when Justin's letter reached Mundir.

### XIII. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE GHASSĀNIDS, 572–575

The response of Mundir to Justin's attempt to assassinate him was withdrawal from the service of Byzantium for some three years, which may be assigned to the period 572–575.<sup>172</sup>

1. The reaction of Mundir to Justin's plot to assassinate him is well described in the *HE* in emotional and military terms. It reveals him as the

<sup>170</sup> The "fire of treachery" is well remembered in the verses of the Kindite Imru' al-Qays, the foremost poet of pre-Islamic Arabia; see *Dīwān Imru' al-Qays*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1958), p. 398, verse 4.

<sup>171</sup> See John of Epiphania, *FHG*, IV, p. 274. His arrival in late summer is also recorded by Theophylact Simocatta. See *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, trans. Michael and Mary Whitby (Oxford, 1986), 87.

<sup>172</sup> For this *triennium*, John of Ephesus remains the principal source but is supplemented by the Greek fragments that have survived from John of Epiphania.

faithful servant of Rome who was requited by treachery and ill will, as he bitterly complains after his services to the Romans: "Num labores mei et operae pro terra Romanorum suscepti mihi capitis praecisione retribuuntur? Num hoc merebam?"<sup>173</sup> Furthermore, he immediately takes precautions to protect himself against possible military action by the Romans and orders his army to be on its guard. He instructs them to seize Roman soldiers who approach their camp in small numbers and keep them closely guarded and to fall on them and fight them if they approach in large numbers.<sup>174</sup>

This description of Ghassānid military alertness vis-à-vis the Romans is valuable. It clearly reflects the military power and prowess that the Ghassānids had attained in the reign of Muḍir after forty years of growth during that of Arethas. The Ghassānids appear as *imperium in imperio*. The clear implication of the passage in the *HE* is that the Ghassānids were still within the *limes* on Roman territory, since it was later that they withdrew from Roman territory to the desert. The chances are that they were not congregated in Gaulanitis in Palaestina Secunda, where their main headquarters and capital were, but were somewhere in the eastern regions of Phoenicia Libanensis or Syria Salutaris, not far from the *Strata* which Arethas had defended in 539. This is all the more remarkable in view of the fact that this state of affairs must have obtained for a few months, extending from the autumn of 572 to the period after the Persian and Lakhmid invasion of Syria in the following year. Throughout this time the Ghassānid camp remained unmolested by Roman troops who obviously could not cope with the open revolt of this powerful and mettlesome portion of the army of the Orient, the Ghassānid *foederati*.<sup>175</sup>

2. The Lakhmid invasion of Syria or Oriens in 573 is presented in relation to the revolt of Muḍir and his withdrawal from the service of Byzantium, after which the Syrian region was open to Lakhmid and Persian attack. The *HE* is informative enough on the devastation that was wreaked on Syria by the invading Lakhmid-Persian host, wasting it with fire and sword as far as Antioch itself and capturing immense booty and a very large number of prisoners.<sup>176</sup> However, Michael the Syrian, who probably utilized the lost portions of the *HE*, has preserved some valuable data on the march of the Persian army through Oriens as he enumerates the towns it passed through, occupied, or pillaged: Beir Balas, Qasrin, Beir Dama, Gaboulaye in the region of Qin-

<sup>173</sup> *HE*, p. 214, lines 25–27.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214, lines 28–33.

<sup>175</sup> These are described in the *HE*, textus, as "yahlē d'Ṭayâyê," p. 283, line 14, and translated correctly into Latin as "catervae Ṭayâyê": *HE*, p. 214, line 34. The Latin correctly captures the nuance in the Syriac, since "catervae" is applied to "barbarian troops" as opposed to Roman regular soldiers.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215, lines 2–13.



nasrīn (Chalcis), and Gazara.<sup>177</sup> A contemporary, John of Epiphania, and after him Theophylact Simocatta,<sup>178</sup> have preserved many significant details.

a. Although they do not speak of Lakhmid participation,<sup>179</sup> this can safely be predicated. The Greek historians pass over in silence the whole affair of Justin and Mundir, and so they would not be expected to pay attention to the detail of Lakhmid participation in the 573 invasion of Syria, but it certainly was a reality. The march through Syria as far as the walls of Antioch was the favorite Lakhmid route of invasion in Byzantine territory, perfected by the Lakhmid king, Mundir, Arethas' adversary, during the reign of Justinian. He often led Persian troops with the view of reaching Antioch, as in the campaign of 531, which, however, stopped at Callinicum. The Persians needed their Arab Lakhmid allies as guides who were familiar with the terrain. Those under Kābūs were only too happy to participate, especially as the Lakhmid king was still smarting under the defeat sustained by him twice, inflicted on him by Mundir in 569 and 570. Moreover, in the account of the Lakhmid-Persian invasion of Syria, the Greek writers describe the march of the Lakhmid-Persian army from its start in Babylonia. It was at Ambaron/Abaron<sup>180</sup> (Arabic Anbār) that the host encamped before Chosroes; whence the army divided into two: one under Chosroes, marching north to the relief of Nisibis; the other under Adarmanes (Adarmahan), with instructions to invade Byzantine Syria. Although the name is Persian, Ambaron was an Arab town<sup>181</sup> ethnically, and moved in the orbit of the Lakhmid capital, Hīra, which was near it. This makes it almost certain that it was there that the Lakhmid contingent joined the Persians under Adarmanes, with Syria as their target.

b. The reports of historians on the devastation inflicted on Syria may be exaggerated, but even after allowance is made for this, both groups of historians, Greek and Syriac, are united in stressing the enormity of the losses inflicted on the Byzantine provinces. Although they did not take Antioch itself, the Persians did capture Apamea and set it afire, and they took large numbers of prisoners. Among these were two thousand virgins whom Chosroes was to send to the king of the Turks and who finally, according to the *HE*, chose self-immolation rather than submit to the humiliation of becoming the harem of the Turkish chagan in central Asia.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 312.

<sup>178</sup> Unnoticed by Nöldeke and Rothstein.

<sup>179</sup> John of Epiphania speaks only of nomadic barbarians as participating: *FHG*, IV, p. 275; Evagrius speaks of Scenite (tented) barbarians: *HE*, p. 205, line 30. Simocatta is silent on the participation of any Arabs in the campaigns: *History*, 87–88.

<sup>180</sup> John of Epiphania, *FHG*, IV, p. 275; Simocatta, *History*, 87; see also *ibid.*, note 45 on Abaron as the Persian Perozshapur.

<sup>181</sup> On Anbār as an Arab town, see *EI*<sup>2</sup>, I, 484–85.

<sup>182</sup> For the story of these virgins, see *HE*, 222–24. There must be a kernel of truth in the

The relevance of this to the withdrawal of Mundir is all too apparent. After resounding victories in 569 and 570, which protected Oriens against Lakhmid and Persian incursions, the northern provinces of Oriens were now exposed to the Lakhmid-Persian forces. The withdrawal of Mundir, in fact, made it possible for Chosroes to work out a strategy in 573 that enabled him to detail one part of his army to invade Syria under Adarmanes while the other part marched under him northward to the relief of Nisibis and the conquest of Daras, which fell in November 573. After retreating scot-free from Syria, Adarmanes joined Chosroes, and this junction contributed to the Persian war effort against beleaguered Daras.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, if Mundir had not withdrawn after his betrayal by Justin, he would certainly have participated in the operations against the Persians in Mesopotamia in 573, judging from the role of his father in the two Persian wars of Justinian's reign. Mundir's military record suggests that before and after the fall of Daras his participation would have made an appreciable difference to the course and outcome of the war. As it turned out, the Persian war on two fronts in Oriens, in Syria and in Mesopotamia, was fought without the participation of the Arab *foederati*, specially trained for these wars, while the Persians were able to fight on two fronts with the help of their Arab allies, the Lakhmids.

c. Especially relevant to the Ghassānid contribution to the Byzantine war effort and the defense of Oriens against the Persians and the Lakhmids is the judgment of the contemporary historian, John of Epiphania. While describing the sorry state of military unpreparedness in Syria with no one offering resistance, the historian then proceeds to explain the background. He states that in view of the peace and tranquility that prevailed in the region during the reign of Justinian, the military establishment had fallen to pieces and the warlike spirit of the people had decayed: Ὑπὸ γὰρ τῆς προλαβούσης εἰρήνης καὶ ἡσυχίας, ἧς ἰκανῶς ἐπὶ τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ βασιλείας ἀπολελαύκασιν, ἐξελέλυτο μὲν αὐτοῖς ἢ τῶν πολεμικῶν παρασκευῆ, τὸ δὲ ἀνδρεῖον τελῶς διέθραρτο.<sup>184</sup> Coming as it does from a contemporary historian and a regional one, who came from Epiphania itself, in Oriens, this judgment is very valuable. It is a tribute to both the efficiency of the Ghassānids in the defense of Oriens for some thirty years after the end of the

story, although the number is most probably grossly exaggerated. The 2,000 virgins recall the 400 that Mundir the Lakhmid captured in Oriens in the 520s; see *BASIC* I.2, 722, 732–33.

<sup>183</sup> As understood by Evagrius, *HE*, p. 207, lines 3–6.

<sup>184</sup> John of Epiphania, *FHG*, IV, p. 275. Evagrius, too, testifies to the same state of conditions when he says that the Persian commanders captured towns that offered no resistance; Evagrius, *HE*, p. 206, lines 2–3. This goes to confirm the thesis that the Byzantines left the defense of the region to the Ghassānid *foederati*. This is illustrated by the campaign of 554. When Arethas heard that the Lakhmid Mundir had attacked Oriens and penetrated as far as Chalcis, he rushed to meet him and defeated him.

second Persian war in 545 and to the Arab policy of the much-maligned Justinian who had reposed unshakable confidence in the Ghassānids throughout his long reign and the equally long reign of his vassal, Arethas.<sup>185</sup> It is especially valuable as it is a commentary on what actually happened in Syria as a result of the Lakhmid-Persian invasion of 573, which came after the victories of the Ghassānid *foederati* in 569/70 over the same enemies that now devastated Syria. It can be brought together with the statement in the *HE* on the peace that reigned in Oriens between the Lakhmids and the Ghassānids as long as the Ghassānid Arethas was alive.

d. Another statement in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrius is *a propos* in this context, in spite of the antipathetic attitude of the historian to the Arabs and to this Ghassānid king in particular, Munḍir. While speaking of the campaign of Maurice and his appointment by Tiberius for the conduct of the war against the Persians, he laments the failure of Munḍir to cross the Euphrates and help Maurice against the Persian Arabs. Although the truth or falsity of his evaluation of Munḍir will be examined later, what is relevant here is his judgment that the Arabs are invincible except when faced by other Arabs because of the fleetness of their horses. When surrounded they cannot be captured, and when they retreat, they outrace their pursuing enemy: ἀκαταγώνιστοι γὰρ τοῖς ἄλλοις διὰ τὴν τῶν ἵππων ἀκύτητα, οὔτε καταλαμβάνομενοι εἴ που ἐγκλεισθεῖεν, καὶ τοὺς ἀπ' ἐναντίας ἐν ταῖς ὑπαγωγαῖς προφθάνοντες.<sup>186</sup> The statement is a recognition of the value of having Arab allies to fight those of the Persian adversary. As Evagrius is speaking of the Mesopotamian scene, his statement is relevant, since the presence of Munḍir on that front in 573 would have made a difference to the war, as indeed it would later in the decade after the reconciliation.

3. It was only after the Lakhmid-Persian invasion of Byzantine Syria that Munḍir decided to withdraw from Roman territory. In the words of the *HE*: "is autem ducto exercitu suo exiit et in deserto consedit."<sup>187</sup> This represents the second phase of his defection and may be analyzed as follows.

a. The historian speaks of his *exercitus*, his "army," and this term has often been used by Greek historians, too, to refer to the Ghassānid contingent in the army of Oriens. It reflects the fact that the Ghassānid contingent was not merely a band of Saracens but a full-fledged regular army, and the fact is reflected also in both the Greek and the Arabic sources which refer to the Ghassānid στρατός and *jaysh*.<sup>188</sup>

b. The move to the desert clearly indicates that until then, and in spite

<sup>185</sup> On this see "Frontier Studies," in *BASIC II*.

<sup>186</sup> See Evagrius, *HE*, p. 216, lines 9–12.

<sup>187</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 215, lines 14–15.

<sup>188</sup> For Greek στρατός, see Procopius, above, 219, 229; for Arabic *jaysh*, see *BASIC II*.

of his defection, the Ghassānids were still encamped on Roman territory.<sup>189</sup> Where in the desert they emigrated to is not clear; they could have moved to the mouth of Wādī Sirhān or to some oases in northern Arabia east of Phoenicia Libanensis or Syria Salutaris. The allied tribe of Kalb was settled in all these regions, and the Ghassānids could conceivably have settled among them in *jiwār* relationship with them.

c. The reasons behind Mundīr's decision to withdraw to the desert are noteworthy. They combined sharp disappointment over Roman infidelity and grief at the sight of Roman territory being devastated by both the Persians and his inveterate enemies, the Lakhmids. In the words of John of Ephesus (*HE*, p. 215, lines 12–14), his reasons are expressed as follows: “cum Mondir de dolo qui in eum factus est et de vastatione quam hostes fecerunt et e terra Romanorum divitias nacti sunt paeniteret et doleret.” His decision to withdraw because of the plot is understandable, but the more remarkable reason is his grief at the devastation of Roman territory. John of Ephesus may have been exaggerating or may have been too warm toward his Ghassānid co-confessionalist, but there must have been an element of truth in what he says. Mundīr was a pious and zealous Christian, and his loyalty to both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* was beyond doubt. It is therefore not incredible that he should have grieved at the sight of Roman territory being devastated since he viewed it as sacred Christian territory being devastated by a combined force of infidels—fire-worshipping Persians and pagan Lakhmids. This is all the more so in view of the capture and burning of Apamea with its fragment of the True Cross.<sup>190</sup> It is not difficult to imagine the crisis of conscience that Mundīr must have experienced while watching the desecration of Apamea, whereas normally he would have hurried to the defense of the Christian relic. Only three years before, his victory in 570 was hailed by the church of the Semitic Orient as a victory of the Cross (“triumphavit crux”). He must have felt some responsibility for what happened while he was on Roman territory. His decision to move *extra limitem* is thus understandable as he would have appeared less culpable<sup>191</sup> if his residence was in the desert far from Roman territory and the scene of the devastation and desecration.

<sup>189</sup> Note the reference to “terra Romanorum” in contrast to the desert in Mundīr's instructions to his soldiers. *HE*, p. 215, lines 24 and 27.

<sup>190</sup> Agapius states that the Persians possessed themselves of the Apamean fragment of the True Cross and took it back to Persia. But this is disputed by others: G. Downey, *A History of Antioch* (Princeton, 1961), 564, records the arrival of the fragment in Antioch. In any case, Apamea was to the Ghassānid religious phylarch a holy city of some sort because of the fragment of the True Cross.

<sup>191</sup> This feeling of culpability is even implied in Justin's reaction and his realization that the one responsible for the defense of Roman territory, Mundīr, was no longer available for the task: *HE*, p. 215, lines 18–20.

4. The withdrawal to the desert *extra limitem* represents the second phase of Munḍir's defection. The account of the *HE* raises two questions.

a. Throughout this period Munḍir is pictured as entirely resistant to all the efforts that the Roman state made in order to win him back to the service. And John of Ephesus quotes the instructions of the Ghassānid king to his followers on how to treat all overtures of peace, reflecting his utter loss of faith in Byzantine assurances.<sup>192</sup> This is rather strange but understandable. After the horror of the experience of reading his own death warrant following his victories, the feeling must have lingered in him that the official attitude not only had not changed but may even have hardened because of the devastation of Syria in 573, which Byzantium could easily have held Munḍir responsible for, since this was exactly his assignment—to defend Roman territory against any Lakhmid-Persian invasion.

b. More important is the period that this withdrawal lasted. It is difficult to measure it precisely since the *HE* gives an approximate figure and, what is more, in one section it was "for two or three years"<sup>193</sup> and shortly after in the following section it lasted "for a period of three years, more or less."<sup>194</sup> Perhaps the problem may be solved by saying that it was three years from the autumn of 572 when Munḍir received the letter of Justin and two years from the time when he withdrew from Roman territory. Thus the three years represent the entire period of withdrawal in two phases, while the two years represent the second one only.<sup>195</sup>

But the date of the co-rulership with Tiberius, 7 December 574 when Justin was declared insane, presents a problem. The account of the *HE* suggests that the reconciliation took place while Justin was not quite insane, and so this must have happened before 7 December. On the other hand, it may have happened in 575, that is, after this date in 574, since Justin, even during the co-rulership with Tiberius, was the true ruler and had spells of lucidity during which he would have been the one involved in the process of reconciliation with Munḍir as described in the *HE*. So it is best to date the *triennium* of withdrawal with Stein as extending from 572 to 575.

5. As has been made clear in the preceding section, the plot against Munḍir turned out to be a disaster of large dimensions in Arab-Byzantine relations.

<sup>192</sup> For these see *ibid.*, p. 215, lines 23–29.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215, line 29.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216, lines 2–3.

<sup>195</sup> In opting for the three-year period, I follow E. Stein who, with superior knowledge of Byzantine history, convincingly invalidated the conclusions of the distinguished Orientalists, Nöldeke and Rothstein, on dating the period of withdrawal; see Stein, *Studien*, 51 note 6, with reference to both Orientalists. The conclusion is important for setting the chronology of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in this decade and for the date of the first journey of Munḍir to Constantinople. Nöldeke thought the reconciliation took place in 578.

a. The emperor of the Romans who prided himself on his title *fidelis*, in the old pagan passive sense of the term, and in the new active Christian sense of the term, suffered a diminution of his prestige in Oriens, as is clear from the *HE*. There was documentary evidence for his treachery in the form of the letter he wrote to Marcianus which fell into the hands of the prospective victim and which Munḍir circulated in Oriens for everyone to see. The concept of *fides* that lay behind the *foedus* of the two contracting parties suffered a severe shock, with dire consequences for both the Ghassānids and Byzantium, in the Arab perception now an unreliable and treacherous ally.

b. The plot had disastrous consequences for Ghassānid-Byzantine relations; its immediate consequence was the alienation of Munḍir and his powerful army for some three precious years. This was both unfortunate and disastrous; unfortunate in view of the fact that after forty years of training and discipline under Arethas, the Ghassānid contingent was at its peak as an instrument of victory in any war with the Lakhmid-Persian enemy, as the early smashing victories of Munḍir in 569/70 fully testify;<sup>196</sup> disastrous for Byzantium, in view of the fact that this coincided with the outbreak of the Persian war, after ten years of peace since 561. The early phase of the war was an unrelieved disaster for Byzantium in both Syria and Mesopotamia, and this was so in no small measure due to the withdrawal of Munḍir from the service and the non-availability of the mettlesome Ghassānid contingent for combat duty in the Persian war.<sup>197</sup>

c. It also set the stage for the future course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. A few years later the same farce was repeated against Munḍir with a plot that worked this time and resulted in his capture in Oriens, his detention in Constantinople, and his exile to Sicily. The same treatment was meted out to his son Nu'mān, and although Ghassānid-Byzantine relations witnessed a turn for the better later in the century, they never returned to their original harmonious condition, with dire consequences for the entire Byzantine presence in Oriens in the seventh century.

d. For Justin himself, the plot ultimately and indirectly contributed its share to the inevitable progress of his mental imbalance on the sure road to insanity. It has been observed earlier that the outcome of the battle for Daras might have been different for Byzantium had Marcianus had at his disposal the powerful Ghassānid army. As it turned out, the battle was fought without it and Daras fell, much to the consternation of Justin; its fall unhinged him and drove him to insanity. So lord and vassal suffered, and it was ironic that

<sup>196</sup> It is noteworthy that no non-Ghassānid *foederati* are heard of in the course of these events. The Ghassānids had emerged as the dominant Arab force in Oriens, so that mention of others is practically non-existent in the sources. However, in the 580s, and after the exile of Nu'mān, Munḍir's son, echoes of the Salīhids, the old *foederati*, are audible; see below, 550–51.

<sup>197</sup> This was well understood by Stein; see *Studien*, 44.



in his insanity the phantom of the house of Mundir continued to haunt him. John of Ephesus states that his courtiers used to calm him down during his fits of insanity by telling him that Arethas the Ghassānid was coming upon him.

#### XIV. THE PERSIAN CONQUEST OF SOUTH ARABIA, 570

Quite early in the reign of Mundir, around 570, the Persians conquered South Arabia and occupied it for some sixty years. This put an end to Byzantium's presence in a region that had been in its sphere of influence for roughly fifty years, and it completely changed the balance of power in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>198</sup>

There are two sets of sources—Greek and Arabic—for the Persian conquest and occupation of South Arabia. The first are contemporary and set the conquest in the context of Byzantine-Persian rivalry and *Weltpolitik* involving the two world powers. The second are late and set the conquest principally in a sequence of events that involved the Ethiopians, the South Arabians, and the Persians, with little attention to Byzantium and the Byzantine-Persian rivalry in South Arabia.

#### The Greek Sources

These consist of three sources: Theophanes of Byzantium, John of Epiphania, and Theophylact Simocatta. The important ones are the first and the second since these authors wrote specifically on periods of Byzantine history that involved the Persian conquest and were contemporaries of it, while the third is a slightly later author, and his account is derivative from that of John of Epiphania.<sup>199</sup> Therefore Theophylact can safely be ignored, and the analysis of the Greek sources will be confined to Theophanes of Byzantium and John of Epiphania. These were Byzantine writers, one of whom lived in Antioch far from South Arabia, and so they could have derived their information only from official accounts. The loss of such a vast and important region such as South Arabia must have been a matter of grave concern to Byzantium, even though Justin II was a ruler who had no great interest in the Arabian

<sup>198</sup> The Persian conquest of South Arabia in 570 has not been thoroughly studied, and the Greek sources have not been laid under contribution. The most recent treatment is to be found in the *Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1983), III.1; there are two brief versions of the conquest: on p. 158 and pp. 606–7. The second by E. Bosworth is the sounder version which, *inter alia*, correctly dates the conquest. It also discusses the second Persian intervention in South Arabia, a purely Persian-Arabian affair, and thus falls outside the purview of this volume. The treatment is an advance on that of A. Christensen in *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), 373, which is disappointing. A paper on the Persian conquest of South Arabia was read at a meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies (England) by François de Blois, but is unavailable to me.

<sup>199</sup> He wrote, under Heraclius (610–641), a history of the reign of Maurice (582–602).

regions. So accounts of the conquest must have become available to the Byzantines almost immediately. Hence the data provided by these two Greek sources are valuable, especially as they correct or supplement the Arabic sources, which are so detailed and full of accounts but whose genuineness cannot be checked.

*Theophanes of Byzantium*

Theophanes of Byzantium,<sup>200</sup> who lived in the second half of the sixth century, wrote the *Historica* in ten books, an account of the period of fifteen years from 566 to 581, and so the Persian occupation of South Arabia fell within his purview and scope. His work has survived only in some fragments, one of which fortunately deals with the Persian conquest. In that fragment he recounts that Chosroes warred against the Ethiopians, who were friendly allies of the Romans and who were once called Macrobioi but now Homeritae; that he captured alive the king of the Homeritae, Sanatourkes, through the Persian Miranes; that he destroyed the city of the Homeritae and subjugated the people: Διὸ καὶ ὁ Χοσρόης ἐπ' Αἰθίοπας, φίλους ὄντας Ῥωμαίοις, τοὺς πάλαι μὲν Μακροβίους, νῦν δὲ Ὅμηρίτας, καλουμένους, ἐστράτευσε. Καὶ τὸν τε βασιλέα τῶν Ὅμηριτῶν Σανατούρκην διὰ Μιράνου τοῦ Περσῶν στρατηγοῦ ἐζώγησε, τήν τε πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐξεπόρθησε, καὶ τὸ ἔθνος παρεστήσατο.<sup>201</sup>

1. Perhaps the most important word in this passage is the first one, διό, "for that reason," since it helps establish the date of the conquest with near certainty. Theophanes had just given an account of the embassy that Justin had sent to the Turks of central Asia, which greatly irritated the Persians who construed the embassy as a hostile act.<sup>202</sup> The Persians, therefore, retaliate by sending an expedition for the conquest of South Arabia. So the Byzantine embassy to the Turks that took place in 569 constitutes the terminus post quem. Immediately after recounting the Persian conquest of South Arabia, Theophanes gives an account of the Armenian revolt against the Persians<sup>203</sup> and the Byzantine involvement in it as causes for the outbreak of hostilities in 572. The Armenian revolt took place in 571 after the Persian conquest of South Arabia, and so this date constitutes the terminus ante quem. The conquest took place between these two dates, and so it is practically certain that 570 was its date.

2. In addition to fixing the date of the conquest, the passage in Theo-

<sup>200</sup> On Theophanes see H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* (Munich, 1978), I, 309.

<sup>201</sup> *FHG*, IV, p. 271.

<sup>202</sup> For this embassy described by Menander Protector, see Blockley, *Menander*, 117–27. According to Blockley, the embassy departed in August 569; see *ibid.*, 263 note 126.

<sup>203</sup> For the Armenian revolt, see *Cambridge History of Iran*, III.1, p. 159.

phanes gives the background for it, putting it in the context of a retaliation by Persia against Byzantine unfriendly activity in central Asia. This is likely to be the more important background of the conquest—*Weltpolitik* rather than the appeal that, according to the Arabic sources,<sup>204</sup> a Ḥimyarite made to Chosroes for help in ousting the Ethiopians from his country.

3. The Ethiopians here are of course not those of Axum in Africa but of South Arabia—those of Abraha, the ally of Byzantium. They are rather inaccurately identified with the Ḥimyarites, presumably because it was in the land of the Ḥimyarites that they now lived and ruled. The term *Μακροβίοι* is strange. It does not appear in the earlier writers who call the South Arabians by other names.<sup>205</sup> It is possibly a corruption of *μακάριοι*, “the blessed, the happy,” since South Arabia was called *εὐδαίμων* by classical writers.<sup>206</sup> More likely, Theophanes is classicizing and calling the Ethiopians what Herodotus called them.<sup>207</sup>

4. The data on the Ethiopian king is important, especially as it departs from the Arabic accounts in two important respects. The name of the king *Σανατούρχης* can only be the *Masrūq*<sup>208</sup> of the Arabic sources, Abraha’s son, whom the Arabic sources, too, identify as the Ethiopian king who ruled when the Persians invaded the country. But according to these sources, *Masrūq* died in battle and was not captured alive, and this happened not through *Miranes*<sup>209</sup> but through *Wahriz*. However, the name *Μιράνης* could be a corruption of *Murra*,<sup>210</sup> in *Abū Murra*, the name of the Ḥimyarite chief who appealed to Chosroes for help against the Ethiopians. The term “Persian” applied to him in the Greek text could describe only his political, not ethnic, affiliation.<sup>211</sup>

5. Finally, Theophanes says that the Persians destroyed the city, the capital of Ethiopian South Arabia, which according to the Arabic sources was *San‘ā’*. The Arabic sources are silent on this, but an echo of some destruction in *San‘ā’* is reflected in them when they speak of the tearing down of its gate,

<sup>204</sup> On these and possible ways of reconciling them with the Greek, see below, 371–72.

<sup>205</sup> Strabo, for instance, has the four principal peoples of South Arabia correct, but none of them is called “*Μακροβίοι*”; see *Geography*, trans. H. L. Jones (London-New York, 1930), VII, p. 311.

<sup>206</sup> Even as late as the 10th century by Constantine Porphyrogenitus; see *De ceremoniis* (Bonn ed.), I, p. 691, line 24.

<sup>207</sup> See Herodotus, Book III. 17.

<sup>208</sup> Further on *Masrūq*, see below, 370–71.

<sup>209</sup> Persian *Mihran*. On the family, see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 139 note 3; Christensen *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 104 ff.

<sup>210</sup> On *Abū Murra*, see below, 369–70.

<sup>211</sup> This is suggested as a remote possibility; Nöldeke is most probably correct in suggesting that the name, *Miranes*, is an oversight by Photius who preserved this fragment, and who confused the conqueror of South Arabia with another Persian figure, whose name, *Miranes*, appears twice later on in the fragment; see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 223 note 3.

which the Persian conqueror deemed too low to admit his standard.<sup>212</sup> It is not inconceivable that there was some destruction of Ethiopian structures as an act of retaliation by the Himyarites for similar acts perpetrated by the Ethiopians<sup>213</sup> when they conquered South Arabia ca. 520.

### *John of Epiphania*

John of Epiphania<sup>214</sup> also flourished in the second half of the sixth century and wrote the history of the long Byzantine-Persian war of 572–592. Only one fragment of his history has survived, and fortunately it is the introduction to the work and the beginning of its first book. In describing the outbreak of the Persian war of Justin II's reign in 572 he naturally speaks of its causes. Here he includes an account of the mutual recriminations voiced by the two contestants, the Romans charging the Persians with the invasion of South Arabia, the Persians countering by referring to the Byzantine embassy to the Turks. The Byzantines, who strongly resented the invasion, laid the charge that the Persians had tried to have the Homeritae (an Indian nation and an ally of Byzantium) revolt against them, and that having failed in their attempt to win them over, they sent an expedition against them in violation of the peace treaty which was still in force: Τὰς μὲν οὖν αἰτίας τῆς τῶν γενῶν φιλονεικίας ἀλλήλοις ἐπήγον. Ῥωμαῖοι μὲν χαλεπῶς φέροντες, ὅτι τοὺς Ὀμηρίτας (Ἰνδικὸν δὲ τὸ γένος καὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς σύμμαχόν τε καὶ ὑπήκοον) ἀποστῆσαι Μῆδοι διενοήθησαν, μηδαμῶς δὲ ἐλομένων ἐκείνων, ἔφοδον κατ' αὐτῶν ἐποιήσαντο τοῦ χρόνου τῶν σπονδῶν ἐνισταμένου.<sup>215</sup> Although both Theophanes and John were writing contemporary history, there is a slight difference between the two in their record of the South Arabian expedition. Theophanes recorded it as part of the historical period he was writing about, 566–581. John recorded it as a thing of the past, the immediate past of 570, since he started his narrative proper in 572, the year that witnessed the outbreak of the long Persian war, the theme of his work. Nevertheless, the account of John, short as it is, is informative and presents some deviations from that of Theophanes.

1. The first sentence suggests that the Byzantines lamented the loss of South Arabia and felt it so keenly that they considered it almost *casus belli* with the Persians. So this is to be construed as a contemporary reflection of the mood in Byzantium concerning the loss of the South Arabian region, and the idiom of the historian must be authentic. In spite of Justin II's preoccupa-

<sup>212</sup> Nöldeke, *PAS*, 226.

<sup>213</sup> For this see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 192, and the present writer in "Byzantium in South Arabia," *DOP* 33 (1979), 55–56.

<sup>214</sup> On John of Epiphania, see Hunger, *Literatur*, I, 312 f.

<sup>215</sup> *FHG*, IV, p. 274.

tion with non-Arabian concerns, the Persian occupation of South Arabia was a great loss to the empire.

2. The Homeritae are described as Indic, allies, and subjects: Ἰνδικὸν δὲ τὸ γένος καὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς συμμαχόν τε καὶ ὑπήκοον. The first term is commonly used by Byzantine writers of this period who speak of the peoples of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean as Indians. The third ("subjects") is untrue and must be an exaggeration on the part of the historian. The second is valuable as it suggests that the Homeritae had been for some time during the Ethiopian domination not only a nation friendly to the Romans but were technically allies (σύμμαχοι) of Byzantium. This raises the question as to when they became allies. Around the year 530 the Homeritae were still a dependency of the Ethiopians, and the accounts of Julian's embassy around that date suggest that their alliance was derivative from that which obtained between Byzantium and Ethiopia.<sup>216</sup> The revolt of Abraha shortly after the 530s would have estranged South Arabia from Byzantium for a few years until the arrival of the international embassy at his court ca. 540, in which Byzantium was represented by three ambassadors.<sup>217</sup> The fruit of this embassy was apparently the reestablishment of friendly relations between Byzantium and South Arabia and the conclusion of an alliance (συμμαχία).<sup>218</sup> This may be inferred from the fact that Abraha appears on the side of Byzantium in his military adventures,<sup>219</sup> which in turn suggests that the Persian embassy to Abraha ca. 540 failed to win him over to the Persian side. The alliance referred to in the account of John of Epiphania could possibly, therefore, go back to around 540 and was thirty years in duration. John's account is valuable in that it is the only explicit reference in the sources to the fact that South Arabia was an ally of Byzantium in this period.<sup>220</sup>

3. The datum on the unsuccessful attempt of the Persians to win over the Homeritae is not to be found in Theophanes of Byzantium nor in the Arabic sources.<sup>221</sup> It is impossible to vouch for its truth or falsity. It may be a fact left

<sup>216</sup> On Julian's embassy to the world of the Southern Semites, ca. 530, see above, 144–48.

<sup>217</sup> On this embassy see *BASIC II*.

<sup>218</sup> This conclusion is tentative since the purpose of the embassy is not entirely clear.

<sup>219</sup> On these see *BASIC II*.

<sup>220</sup> Even the alliance with Ethiopia around 530 is not explicitly stated in the sources, although it is implied in Julian's account of his embassy. There is no mention of alliance (συμμαχία), only friendship (φιλία) in the response of the Negus (Malalas, *Chronographia*, p. 457, line 12) and "the community of religion" (τὸ τῆς δόξης ὁμόγνωμον) in Justinian's approach (Procopius, *History*, I.xx.9).

<sup>221</sup> Possibly an echo of the residence of Dū-Yazan, the Ḥimyarite dissident of South Arabia, in Persian territory in the 560s; see below, 372. The Lakhmids were also dissatisfied with the Byzantines in the 560s because the latter did not pay them the subsidies which they claimed as their due and consequently made noises on the frontier. It is not inconceivable that they also intrigued in South Arabia with the Ḥimyarites, inciting them against the Ethiopians,

unrecorded by Theophanes, or it may be an exaggeration on the part of John, who inserted it in the context of a mood of recrimination in which the two contestants indulged.

4. The last datum is the legal aspect of the Persian occupation in the Byzantine perspective. John is clearly thinking of the Persian-Byzantine peace treaty of 561 and of the Persian occupation as a violation of it. Hence one may now consider the Homeritae of South Arabia as included within the purview of those who drew up the text of the treaty and who considered South Arabia as a Byzantine sphere of influence and the Homeritae or the Ethiopians in Ḥimyar as allies, *σύμμαχοι*.<sup>222</sup>

#### The Arabic Sources

In contrast to the Byzantine sources, the Arabic sources are many and detailed, but the Byzantine profile cuts a relatively small figure in them. They present the Persian occupation as a result not of Persian design but as a response to a request made by a South Arabian Ḥimyarite to Chosroes for help against the Ethiopian oppressors.

#### *Hishām*

Of the various accounts, that preserved by Ṭabarī is the most reliable. His account preserves two traditions, one going back to Ibn Ishāq and the other to Hishām al-Kalbī. The latter is the more reliable of the two traditions, and it represents the Byzantine profile in its true historical perspective.<sup>223</sup>

1. While Ibn Ishāq sends Sayf, the Ḥimyarite noble, to the Roman emperor invoking his aid against the Ethiopian ruler, Hishām sends the Ḥimyarite nobleman Abū Murra (Dū-Yazan) to Chosroes in Ctesiphon, the obvious port of call for a Ḥimyarite rebel.<sup>224</sup> The Persians had been the natural allies of Ḥimyar against Byzantium and now against their ally, the Ethiopians.<sup>225</sup>

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who ruled South Arabia and were the allies of Byzantium. Lakhmid-Ethiopian hostilities are recorded in the Murayghān inscription for the 540s; see *BASIC II*. The inscription records the victory of Abraha, the Ethiopian ruler of Ḥimyar.

<sup>222</sup> The clash of satellites and allies before the peace treaty of 561 is recorded in the Murayghān inscription, *ibid*.

<sup>223</sup> Ṭabarī's account was translated into German by Nöldeke in *PAS*; for the tradition going back to Ibn Ishāq, see *PAS*, 219–27; for that going back to Hishām, see 227–36. The footnotes as usual are excellent, even after more than a century. Nöldeke appreciated and accepted the historical kernel in Ṭabarī's account in spite of the later accretions and embroideries; *ibid.*, 220 note 4.

<sup>224</sup> See Nöldeke, *PAS*, 227–28.

<sup>225</sup> And this has a precedent: around 520 Yūsuf, the Judaizing king of South Arabia, sends an appeal to Mundir, the Lakhmid king of Ḥira, asking him to persecute the Christians



2. Chosroes, contrary to what the Byzantine source says, is far from interested in getting involved in South Arabian affairs and does not respond. As a result, Abū Murra lingers for years in Persian territory.<sup>226</sup> It is possible that Byzantium, through its intelligence service, was apprised of the presence of the Ḥimyarite in Ctesiphon. Hence possibly the statement in John of Epiphania that Chosroes intrigues with the Ḥimyarites in order to win them over to his side.

3. As a result of the failure of the mission of Abū Murra in Ctesiphon, his son Maʿdīkarib decides to approach the Roman emperor for aid against the Ethiopians. The response of the Roman emperor sounds perfectly authentic. Hishām's account reads: "and he (Maʿdīkarib) found him defending the Ethiopians because of the community of religion."<sup>227</sup>

4. It was only after his disappointment with the Roman emperor that Maʿdīkarib goes to Ctesiphon. This time Chosroes is in a receptive mood<sup>228</sup> and orders an expedition against South Arabia under the Persian Wahrīz, who succeeds in defeating the Ethiopian king, Masrūq, and in occupying South Arabia, which thus for sixty years moves in the Persian sphere of influence, supervised by Persian marzbāns, satraps.<sup>229</sup>

These are the most significant data in Hishām for the Byzantine-Persian involvement in South Arabia and for the analysis of the Greek sources. But a word must be said on the last Ethiopian king of South Arabia, Byzantium's ally, and on his name, Masrūq.

### *Masrūq*

Masrūq was the younger son of Abraha, the elder being Yaksum. He was Abraha's son by Rayḥāna, the wife of the Ḥimyarite chief, Abū Murra (Dū-Yazan), who sought foreign aid—Persian and Byzantine—against Masrūq. Her beauty attracted the attention of Abraha, who took her from her husband and made her his wife. To Abū Murra she had borne Maʿdīkarib, who also approached both Byzantium and Persia for help against the Ethiopian Masrūq and finally succeeded. So Masrūq and Maʿdīkarib were half-brothers.<sup>230</sup> Abraha's marriage to Rayḥāna was less of a romantic affair than a political marriage which strengthened Abraha's position as a usurper in Arabia.

The name Masrūq is noteworthy. It appears in Theophanes as Σαυα-

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in his realm. He also sends a letter to Kawad, the Persian king, for alignment with South Arabia against Byzantium; see the present writer in "Conference of Ramla," 122–23.

<sup>226</sup> Nöldeke, *PAS*, 228.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 229–30.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 229–33.

<sup>230</sup> For this prosopographical note on Masrūq, see Hishām in Nöldeke, *PAS*, 227, 229, and 229 note 1.

τούρχης, but, as has been pointed out by Nöldeke, it is a corruption of Μαστρούκης, the more accurate transliteration of the name in Greek.<sup>231</sup> It is also a startling name for the Christian ruler of South Arabia. It had been applied pejoratively to Yūsuf, the Ḥimyarite persecutor of the Christians of South Arabia, around 520 in the *Syriac* tradition.<sup>232</sup> However, applied to Abraha's son it possibly carried no derogatory sense,<sup>233</sup> and its application to him could indicate that Arab, Ethiopian, and Sabaeen South Arabia was unaware of the application of the term to Yūsuf or of its pejorativeness.

#### The Two Sets of Sources

In spite of the romantic and epic elements in the accounts of the Arabic historians, the kernel of historical truth in them is discernible. While the Greek sources tell the story of the Persian occupation in the context of the international relations of the two world powers, and ignore the internal situation in South Arabia, the Arabic tell just this story and fill the gap in the sequence of historical events that led to the Persian occupation. Thus the two sets of sources are complementary to each other: they each emphasize different aspects, and whatever differences there are admit of being reconciled.

The Arabic sources are pro-Persian. Although the Persians conquered South Arabia and the region saw a change of masters rather than a return to independent native Ḥimyarite rule, the Persians appear as heroes and liberators and are called in these sources Abnā' al-Aḥrār, literally "the Sons of the Free."<sup>234</sup> And this is their image in the Arab literary mirror in the panegyric composed by a Ḥijāzī poet, Umayya ibn-abī-al-Ṣalt, on the Persian conquest.<sup>235</sup> This is not entirely surprising. Hishām received his information on the occupation from Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids, the vassals of the Persians. Moreover, the Arabs seem to have felt it humiliating to be governed by the Ethiopians and looked at Persian rule as the lesser evil.

<sup>231</sup> See Nöldeke, *PAS*, 220 note 2. Perhaps the corrupt transliteration is due to confusion with the name of the king of Hatra.

<sup>232</sup> On this see the present writer in *Martyrs*, 262–64.

<sup>233</sup> Many Arabs adopted this name and another, related to it, Surāqa, derived from the same root: S-R-Q. See Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishṭiqāq*, ed. 'A. Hārūn (Cairo, 1958), 306, 425, 480 and *BASIC* II.

<sup>234</sup> See Nöldeke's note on this phrase in *PAS*, 235 note 2. In spite of the force of his argument for the metaphorical interpretation of *aḥrār* as *adlich*, the literal semantic component cannot be ruled out. South Arabian society knew slavery, and many of the slaves came from Ethiopia (Procopius, *History*, I.xix.2). So the phrase "the Sons of the Free" may have been used as a taunt against the Ethiopians. For the employment of the phrase in a Syriac document on South Arabia around 520, see *Martyrs*, 49–50, 53–54.

<sup>235</sup> For a German translation of this poem, see Nöldeke, *PAS* 234–36. The poem is sometimes attributed to Umayya, sometimes to his father, but as the son was a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad after his call in A.D. 610, the poem may have been composed by his father, as Hishām suggests; see *ibid.*, 234 note 1.

The two vassals of Byzantium and Persia—the Ghassānids and the Lakhmids—are strangely enough conspicuous by their absence, even in the Arabic sources. This is especially true of the Ghassānids since the Lakhmids receive mention once, when the Ḥimyarite Dū-Yazan comes first to Ḥīra, to the Lakhmid ruler for an introduction to Chosroes.<sup>236</sup> But in the later accounts of the expedition to South Arabia, they are not mentioned, presumably because it was a naval expedition rather than a land invasion through Arabia which would have involved the Lakhmids.

The Ghassānids could not have done anything to prevent a Persian occupation of South Arabia. They were stationed in faraway Oriens, and that particular juncture was far from propitious. The old warrior Arethas had died in 569, and the Lakhmids almost immediately launched an attack against the Ghassānids and continued to do so for the next two years. Hence the inability of the Ghassānid Muḥdir to attend to the South Arabian front.<sup>237</sup> Thus the Persians could effect the conquest of the region without having to face the seasoned troops of the Ghassānid *foederati*.

#### XV. THE CO-RULERSHIP OF TIBERIUS, 574–578

In December 574 Tiberius became caesar and co-ruler with Justin when Justin's insanity became patent. Thus Tiberius was de facto ruler of Byzantium from 574 to 578. His co-rulership inaugurated a new period in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, which contrasts sharply with the preceding one when Justin II ruled alone. During this period, Ghassānid-Byzantine relations were restored, and they continued to improve after Tiberius became sole emperor in 578. But toward the end of Justin's reign, around 578, relations soured completely, and Muḥdir was betrayed, arrested, and exiled to Sicily. So the choice of Tiberius as co-ruler becomes a matter of considerable significance to Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, and the reasons for his choice are important to discuss. Just as Sophia and Justin ascended the throne as the niece and nephew of Theodora and Justinian, why did not Sophia, in the early 570s when Justin's insanity became evident, work for Arabia and her husband Baduarius to succeed her and Justin?

As far as Baduarius is concerned, he had been *curopalates*, as Justin himself had been, and he could have succeeded him, just as Justin had succeeded Justinian, being so closely related to the imperial family. But almost immediately before Justin's insanity became evident, relations between him and his son-in-law soured. Theophanes recounts a scene,<sup>238</sup> which he precisely dates to

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 227–28.

<sup>237</sup> Muḥdir's predicament had already been experienced by his grandfather, Jabala, around 520, when that Ghassānid phylarch and king could not march south to the rescue of his co-religionists in South Arabia. See *Martyrs*, 276.

<sup>238</sup> See Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 246.

6 October 573, when Baduarius was *comes stabuli*. He says that during a *silentium* Baduarius annoyed the emperor, who then heaped insults on him and had the *cubicularii* beat him and kick him out.<sup>239</sup> This was hardly a sympathetic background for the election of Baduarius and his elevation to the purple.

Then there was Arabia herself. As has already been mentioned,<sup>240</sup> sometime during the reign of her father she suffered from a mental disorder, and St. Simeon the Younger cured her of demonic possession. So it was impossible to suggest her as the future *augusta*, especially as the consort of the successor to an insane emperor. Perhaps more important is the fact that Sophia had ambitions of her own to continue as *augusta* after the death of Justin. Although Arabia was her daughter, she would have upstaged her as *augusta* and relegated her to the status of "queen mother." No slouch at self-promotion, as evidenced by the liquidity of her confessional conviction when she found it expedient to go over to the Dyophysite position, she would have preferred to be the real *augusta*, for the second time the consort of an *autokrator*, as her plans to marry the future emperor Tiberius indicate.<sup>241</sup> These, however, were not attended by success, and her influence waned after the death of Justin.

For the Ghassānids, all this was unfortunate, since Sophia and Arabia, although Chalcedonians, would have retained from their former Monophysitism some feeling for the Ghassānids in the capital which, after the death of Justinian and Theodora, they badly needed. As it turned out, the advent of Tiberius, well-disposed as he was to the Ghassānids, made possible the accession of Maurice, than whom no emperor could have been worse for the course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. For the time being, however, relations with the Ghassānids were good. This was due not only to the personality of the well-intentioned Tiberius but probably also to the influence of Sophia, the ex-Monophysite niece of Theodora, who practically controlled Tiberius throughout this period until the death of Justin in 578, when Tiberius became sole emperor.

#### XVI. THE GHASSĀNID RETURN TO THE BYZANTINE FOLD

In the spring of 575, and after three years of withdrawal from the service of Rome, Mundir decided to let bygones be bygones and returned to his old loyalty<sup>242</sup> after having received many overtures from Byzantium which he had turned down. He wrote to the newly appointed *magister militum per Orientem*, Justinianus, whom his letter found in a receptive mood for the reconciliation.

<sup>239</sup> Although later, at the instance of Sophia, he visited him at the stables and made peace with him: *ibid.*

<sup>240</sup> See above, 318–22.

<sup>241</sup> See Averil Cameron, "The Empress Sophia," *Byzantium* 45 (1975), 17.

<sup>242</sup> See *HE*, p. 216, lines 3–9.

## A

John of Ephesus is especially informative on the dramatic scenes of this phase of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, and his account in the *HE* deserves a detailed analysis.

1. The two motives of Munḍir in taking the initiative are noteworthy, and both answer to what is known about him: (a) his Christianity; the *HE* makes clear that the Ghassānid king looked on Roman territory as that of the Christian Roman Empire and that it was his duty as a good Christian soldier to defend it against its pagan adversaries.<sup>243</sup> John of Ephesus, as an ecclesiastical historian, may have exaggerated this, but there must be an element of truth in what he says, as witness the correspondence of Munḍir with Justinianus and his exhortation to his troops, which will be discussed below. Furthermore, this was an attitude he had inherited from his father, whose long reign of forty years was spent in the defense of the Christian *limes* against the Lakhmids and the Persians. The statement on his grief over what had befallen Roman territory must be accepted. (b) There was also his chagrin at the sight of Lakhmid troops who, with fire and sword, had devastated Roman territory as far as Antioch. The Lakhmids were the inveterate enemies of the Ghassānids, and his father, Arethas, was given the extraordinary command and *Basileia* by Justinian in 529, specifically as a counterpoise to the devastations the Lakhmid king, Munḍir, had wreaked on Roman territory. Hence the Ghassānids felt they were in a special position vis-à-vis the Lakhmids as guardians of the Christian Roman frontier.

2. Munḍir's peace overture was sent to Justinianus, the newly appointed *magister militum per Orientem*, in a letter that begins by presenting his case against the Roman state which acted treacherously toward him. He goes on to say that he reposes full confidence in the new *magister militum*, both as a nobleman and a good Christian; he also asks him for a meeting at the *martyrion* of St. Sergius at Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) and warns him against any further treachery. It was a soldier's letter in its succinctness and directness:

Ego ab initio dolos Romanorum audiebam et cognovi; nunc autem dolo hoc mortali qui pro laboribus meis in me structus est veritatem experimento didici; et posthac ego ut me ipsum principi ullo Romanorum credam mihi numquam suscipiam. Et tibi, quoniam te virum christianum et ingenuum qui Deum timet esse cognovi, si ad domum beati Mār Sergii Resaphae venies, et mihi nuntium mittes, illuc veniam, cum exercitu meo quasi ad pugnam armatis. Et, si pax mihi obtinget, et veritatem mecum loqueris, ego et tu etiam in concordia revertemur. Et,

<sup>243</sup> Note the difference between Munḍir's description in Justin's letter to Marcianus as "Munḍir, the Saracen," and John of Ephesus, to whom he is "vir christianus": *ibid.*, line 3.

si dolum inveniam, in Deo spero in quem credo, qui manus in me non remisit, nec remitteret.<sup>244</sup>

Justinianus came to Oriens only late in 574 or early in 575. This raises the question of Munḍir's knowledge of him and his background, especially as he addresses him as "virum christianum et ingenuum."<sup>245</sup> Because of their delicate position as Monophysites within a Chalcedonian empire, the Ghassānids kept watch on the men in power in Constantinople, especially the ruling family. Now Justinianus was a relative of Justin and Justinian, and he must have been well known to the Ghassānid royal house which visited Constantinople many times. Furthermore, quite recently, in 572–73, he was probably *magister militum per Armeniam*. The inhabitants of Armenia were Monophysites whose fortunes were known to fellow Monophysites throughout the Orient. Then he was appointed *magister militum per Orientem*, and this must have been a matter of great importance to the Ghassānids in exile since they were normally under the jurisdiction of the *magisterium Orientis*. It is almost certain that in spite of their withdrawal the Ghassānids kept in touch with Oriens and the military situation there. The identity of the new *magister* was especially important to the Ghassānids after the dismissal of Marcianus to whom Justin's letter to Munḍir was wrongly addressed.<sup>246</sup>

The timing of the message was propitious. Three years had passed, and Rome had tasted the bitter fruit of imperial treachery against the Ghassānids in Lakhmid and Persian invasions of its territory. Perhaps Munḍir thought that three years was long enough. It might be remembered that this was the period of the one-year truce between the two powers (February/March 574–575), and, if the meeting took place early in the spring, Munḍir would have felt that the Romans would be anxious to receive offers of peace from him

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., lines 18–25.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., line 22. The Syriac original of "ingenuum" is *ḥar ḥārē*: "the son of freemen." And so *HE*, textus, p. 285, line 19, is more expressive than its Latin rendering. Munḍir may be thinking literally of his father, Germanus, who qualified as such, and his mother, Passara: witness the very warm appreciation of him in Procopius, *History*, VII.x1.9. The Ghassānid Arethas may have known him when he once came to Oriens in 540, dispatched by Justinian to Antioch after the resumption of hostilities with Persia. As to his Christianity, he was involved once in the theological controversies of the period, when Pope Hormisdas wrote to him and the future emperor Justinian in connection with negotiations to end the Acacian schism. Not much is known of his wife, Passara, for whom see *PLRE*, II, 505–7 and 836. So Justinianus' descent from Germanus may shed some light on Munḍir's description of him as a nobleman and a good Christian, in spite of the fact that the career of the latter was a purely military one; see *PLRE*, III, 743–47.

<sup>246</sup> Justin dismissed Marcianus on the grounds of military incompetence and also because he accused him of mishandling the Munḍir affair. In the *Chronique* of Michael the Syrian, he even accused him of disloyalty by warning Munḍir: *Chronique*, II, 309. John of Ephesus exculpates Marcianus from the accusation completely and ascribes it to clerical error at the chancery, as has been explained in the preceding section.



because of the imminent expiration of the truce. Also, in the winter of 574–575, Justinianus was training a large army in Oriens, raised by Tiberius, which included many barbarians.<sup>247</sup> Perhaps Mundir, for that reason, hastened to offer his services, and Justinianus would have been only too happy to accept them, since he wanted to inaugurate his *magisterium* after the expiration of the truce with some victories. The reconciliation with Mundir would have made these certain, or at least easier,<sup>248</sup> and this is exactly what happened. Byzantine arms were suddenly victorious on both fronts, and both Justinianus and Mundir won victories over their respective enemies, against the Persians in Armenia<sup>249</sup> and in Lakhmid territory, including the capital, Hira. Perhaps the conclusion of the three-year peace in Oriens, which, however, did not apply to Armenia where Justinianus scored his victories, was made possible by the fact that the Persians realized now, after Mundir's smashing victory over the Lakhmids, that peace was in their interest.

Most interesting and noteworthy is the choice of the *martyrion* of St. Sergius as the rendezvous for the two commanders. It was of course a good choice—the holiest of all shrines and pilgrimage centers in Syria, Sergiopolis.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>247</sup> For the details see Stein, *Studien*, 59–60. Theophylact Simocatta states that Tiberius collected allies from the nations for the war effort: τὸ συμμαχικὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐθνῶν, which must have been of some concern to the Arab σύμμαχοι, the Ghassānids, at this juncture. For the phrase in Theophylact, see *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1972), p. 134, lines 23–24; see also Evagrius for details on the barbarian troops: *HE*, V, sec. 14.

<sup>248</sup> He must have been anxious that his southern flank, exposed without the Ghassānid contingent, be protected by the latter in order to conduct the war in the northern sector, in Mesopotamia and Armenia, without having to worry about the invasion of Syria by the Lakhmids; cf. Procopius, *History*, II.xvi.17. He did not ask him to join up with him for the campaign in Armenia, and his dispositions were good, since he had enough troops with him to fight the Persians in that sector.

<sup>249</sup> For an evaluation of Justinianus' great victory at Melitene as the Roman victory of the century, together with that of Busta Gallorum, see Stein, *Studien*, 68. On his return to Persia after the disastrous campaign in Armenia, Chosroes enacted a law to the effect that the Persian king of kings should not campaign personally, except against another king. John of Ephesus reports this as follows: "Itaque ut fertur mandatum fecit et legem dedit, ne rursus rex ad bellum exiret, nisi contra regem exiturus esset"; *HE*, 211–12. There are other versions of the law in Evagrius and in Theophylact. According to the first, the law prescribed that the Persian king should not take the field against the Romans; Evagrius, *HE*, 211–12; according to the second, Chosroes decreed that it did not befit the Persian king to campaign personally; Theophylact, *Historiae*, p. 140, lines 18–19. Evagrius is the least accurate of the three, since he has Chosroes die prematurely after the battle of Melitene and because of it. John of Ephesus is the most reliable, and his version of the law sounds very much like a Persian king's decree. It can be clearly and easily related to the report of Abandanes on Belisarius, which he delivered before Chosroes, to the effect that the contest with "a slave of Caesar," and not with Caesar himself, is not an equal one and should therefore be avoided; Procopius, *History*, II.xxi.14.

<sup>250</sup> On Sergiopolis and the Arabs, especially the Ghassānids, see *BASIC* I.2, 949–55. The rendezvous with Justinianus at Ruṣāfa, described in *HE*, cannot be ignored in the discussion of the Ghassānid structure outside its walls, formerly referred to as "ecclesia extra muros" but now confirmed as "praetorium extra muros." Whether the structure with its well-known inscription

Treachery committed inside the shrine would have been impossible, indeed, inconceivable. As far as Mundir is concerned, it was also the natural choice; the attachment of the Arabs to Sergius, the military saint, was well known. Also, its location so close to the desert and in the midst of the "barbarian plain"<sup>251</sup> must have made Mundir feel safer in meeting Justinianus there than at a place deep in Roman territory such as Ḥuwwārīn,<sup>252</sup> where he was to be trapped later in the reign of Tiberius.

Finally, the piety of Mundir as a Christian comes through the message. For the restoration of trust and confidence between him and Rome, he chooses one whose Christianity, in his estimation, was beyond doubt, Justinianus; and he chooses a holy spot, a *martyrion*, where *fides* can be restored and the new relationship can be firmly established. He clinches his point and reflects his Christianity in the concluding sentence of the message which carries also a veiled threat: "Et, si dolum inveniam, in Deo spero in quem credo, qui manus in me non remisit, nec remitteret."<sup>253</sup>

3. Justinianus was naturally pleased and sent a positive answer asking Mundir to meet him at the *martyrion* of St. Sergius. His reply was pervaded by religious statements reassuring to Mundir, who trusts him. Mundir leaves his army behind, but picks up a few attendants and has his conference with Justinianus before the sarcophagus of St. Sergius in his *martyrion*.<sup>254</sup> The two converse alone, compose all outstanding differences, and part in peace and amity. When Justin and the Senate hear of the accords, they rejoice and the two kings exchange letters of peace and reconciliation.<sup>255</sup>

The meeting must have taken place before the three-year peace was concluded later in the year since, shortly after, Mundir conducted a successful campaign against the Lakhmids. This could have happened only during this period, between the expiration of the one-year truce and the beginning of the three-year peace, later in the year 575. As a result of the accord, the Ghasānids must have returned to their old haunts within the *limes* and resumed their watch over the frontier. Once they had done so, Mundir found it possible to engage in the campaign he desired to wage against the Lakhmids.

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commemorates this rendezvous and the success of Mundir in the reconciliation remains to be seen. Whatever the truth about the structure is, the passage in the *HE* is the only one in the literary sources that associates Mundir with Ruṣāfa.

<sup>251</sup> For the "barbarian plain" (τὸ βαρβαρικὸν πεδίον), see Procopius, *History*, II.v.29; the term "barbarian" in this region can only mean "Arab."

<sup>252</sup> For Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), see below, 457–58.

<sup>253</sup> *Dīn* ("religion") has been contrasted with *mūrūʿa* ("manliness," Latin *virtus*) by I. Goldziher. The two are not necessarily in contrast in Islam and appear united in pre-Islamic Arabia among the Christian Arabs; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>254</sup> This was, of course, *inter muros*, a sure sign that Mundir trusted Justinianus.

<sup>255</sup> *HE*, p. 216, line 28; p. 217, line 8.

The account again makes it clear that Muṇḍir spoke Greek and/or Latin. This is the implication of his letter to Justinianus and the latter's reply to him, and even more decisively the meeting between him and Justinianus, again directly without the mediation of an interpreter. Although John of Ephesus does not explicitly state it, it is almost certain that their meeting in Sergiopolis entailed the renewal of the *foedus* that had been broken three years before. The reference to the Senate<sup>256</sup> is noteworthy. It is possible that Muṇḍir may have been voted some honors as a result of the reconciliation and that there was a journey to Constantinople soon after, as will be argued later on.

John of Ephesus had access to the reports on the meeting between the two soldiers.<sup>257</sup> Although he does not explicitly mention it, the two must have discussed the military situation. Justinianus could now count on the Ghassānid contingent, the invincible Ghassānid field army, part of the *exercitus comitatensis* in Oriens, to perform two functions: the protection of the Syrian *limes* and the prosecution of the war against the Lakhmids. Either of these would have committed Lakhmid troops to the south of Oriens, when they were needed in the north, in Mesopotamia. The victories that attended Byzantine arms after the accords, one in Armenia and another in Lakhmid territory in Ḥīra, must be related to the reconciliation and the coordination between the Roman *magister* and the Ghassānid king.

## B

Shortly after the reconciliation Muṇḍir mounted a lightning offensive against the Lakhmids and captured their capital. The campaign is described in detail by John of Ephesus<sup>258</sup> in all its stages.

1. The first phase consists in the preparation for the campaign. Muṇḍir gathers his commanders, mostly members of his family, and orders them to meet him the next day, when he reveals their destination—Ḥīra itself, the capital of the Lakhmids: "Mondir autem animosus et fortis post paulum, cum irae in audaciam Ṭayāyē Persarum plenus esset, et captivos quos a terra Romanorum abduxerunt eripere et liberare studeret, fratres suos et totum genus suum et filios suos et omnes copias eorum silentio congregavit, ut statim cito armati et comiteu instructi adessent, et die secundo omnes apud eum convenirent."<sup>259</sup>

That he conceived this plan shortly ("post paulum") after the reconciliation with Justinianus suggests that it happened shortly after the spring of 575

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., p. 217, lines 5–7.

<sup>257</sup> Naturally Justinianus sent Justin a full account of what had happened at Ruṣāfa on the return of Muṇḍir to the Byzantine fold.

<sup>258</sup> HE, p. 217, lines 9–35.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., lines 10–14.

and before the conclusion of the three-year peace later in the year. It is noteworthy that he directs his attack not against the Persians but against the Lakhmids, since these were properly his enemies, whom he had beaten handsomely in 569 and 570. Furthermore, the offensive had all the qualities of a revanchist attitude for what the Lakhmid-Persian army had done to Syria in 573.

The interest of the passage, however, consists principally in its being revelatory of Mundir as a military commander. First there was the secrecy that attended his preparations. This was necessary because he wanted his offensive to have all the features of a sudden attack which would insure the element of surprise. Besides, the world of the Near East had heard of the reconciliation, and the Lakhmids no doubt were apprised of it. To insure success, the element of surprise was essential: the Lakhmids had a good intelligence service.

Then there was the element of speed. Once Mundir was reconciled, he decided on the offensive. And he gave his army no longer than two days within which to assemble and report to him. He clearly believed in the tactic of attacking with all one's forces for an overwhelming victory. So he asks all his commanders to join, and orders total mobilization. Even after his army had been inactive for some three years, it was alert and ready for combat. The passage also clearly reveals that the Ghassānids fought as a family. Mundir gathers his brothers, his sons, and his relatives in order to tell them about his plans. Not only does the chief phylarch lead the Ghassānid host to the fray, but he is also attended by the immediate members of his family and his other relatives—a source of strength to the supreme phylarch, since he could rely on the support and loyalty of the clan.

2. The second phase of the campaign begins when the Ghassānid army assembles. He reveals to them their destination, Hira, in retaliation for what the Lakhmids had perpetrated against Roman territory. And he concludes with the reflection that the Lord will deliver the Lakhmids into their hands: "Quamobrem, cum convenissent et parate accincti essent, arcanum eis declaravit, dicens: 'Statim, cum vir nullus a nobis se seiunget vel recedet, omnes una in Hirthā de Nu'mān in terra Persarum incidamus; et propter arrogantiam eorum et audaciae eorum in Christianos *patratae* vehementiam Deus eos in manus nostras tradet.'"<sup>260</sup>

The secrecy that attended all the preparations is reflected in the fact that he kept his own army in the dark for days as to their destination and revealed it only when ready to march. He advises them to stay together as one invincible force so that they would break the ranks of the Lakhmids by the momentum generated by the powerful impact of their numbers and the suddenness of

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 217, lines 15–20.

their attack. The Ghassānid army was an army of believers. He appeals to their religious susceptibilities twice: he reminds them that this is a holy war of revenge for what the Lakhmids had done against the Christians of the Roman Empire, and he finally assures them that the Lord will deliver the Lakhmids into their hands.

3. The third phase of the campaign consists of the march to, and capture of, Ḥīra, on which he falls suddenly and which he captures. Furthermore, he pitches his tent and stays there for five days. He destroys the city and sets it afire, except its churches: "Itaque omnes vehementer profecti ad Ḥīrthā pervenerunt et in id silentio inciderunt, cum incolae eius valde inordinati silerent et tranquilli essent. Et exercitum totum qui in eo adfuit trucidaverunt et perdidērunt; et *oppidum* totum ecclesiis exceptis surruit et incendit tabernaculum suo in medio eius statuto, et in dies quinque consedit. Et Ṭayāyē omnes quos comprehenderat comprehendit et vinxit."<sup>261</sup>

The account suggests that Mundir had perfect knowledge of the geography of the area and how to reach Ḥīra. He had rehearsed this in the 570 campaign when he penetrated deep into Lakhmid territory and camped three *mansiones* away from Ḥīra, but was wise enough not to attack it then. This time he did with a vengeance. The key to his success was the secrecy and suddenness that attended his plans. As will be pointed out later, he attacked at a time when the Lakhmids did not expect any harm—in the early morning, perhaps when they were still asleep.

Noteworthy in the account is his destruction of Ḥīra, except the churches, and his setting the city afire. This can only have been in retaliation for what the Lakhmids had done in the Syrian campaign of 573, especially when they captured Heraclea and Apamea and set the latter on fire. John of Ephesus makes a point of saying that Mundir, although he destroyed the city and burned it, yet did spare its churches. This, of course, was to be expected from a zealous Christian soldier such as Mundir was.<sup>262</sup> In addition to the many churches and monasteries of Nestorian Ḥīra, there were a few Monophysite churches.

Most remarkable is the fact that he pitched his *praetorium* in the middle

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., lines 20–26.

<sup>262</sup> When recounting the withdrawal of Mundir for three years from the service of Byzantium, Bury (*HLRE* [1889 ed.], 98), in a footnote, compared him to Achilles when the latter sulked in his tent and would not fight after Agamemnon possessed himself of his slave-concubine Briseis. One could develop the comparison between Mundir and the "descendant" of Achilles. After destroying Thebes, Alexander spared only the house of Pindar. The English epic poet remembered this episode in the sestet of one of his Petrarchan/Miltonic sonnets: "The great Emathian conqueror bid spare/the house of Pindarus, when temple and tower/went to the ground." On Alexander's "descent" from Achilles, see U. Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, trans. E. N. Borza (New York, 1967), 56, 64, 83, 239, and 279.

of the city and stayed there for five days. This can only be a reflection of his self-confidence and also his desire to impress his Lakhmid adversaries with their military inferiority. And most certainly he wanted to answer the taunt of Ḳābūs in 570 who accused him of attacking as a thief, thus misconstruing his speed and suddenness as larceny. Staying five days in the midst of the city surely conveyed vividly to his adversaries that he was no thief in a hurry to leave or slink away quickly and surreptitiously.

4. The fourth and last phase of the campaign begins with his return laden with booty, horses, and camels and carrying back with him all the prisoners of war that the Lakhmids had captured during their raids of Roman territories, as well as enemy prisoners from Ḥīra itself. On his return to Oriens he distributed gifts to the monasteries and churches of the faithful and also among the poor. An account of this phase ends with the statement that his exploits were admired not only by the Byzantines but also by the Persians: "et omnes captivos Ḥīrthā et omnes captivos quos a terra Romanorum abstulerant et abduxerant, et omnes equos eorum et omnia armenta eduxit; et profectus est ad regionem suam triumpho magno et victoria immensa reversus est; quae ei praesertim gloriam et divitias addidit, quas monasteriis et ecclesiis omnibus orthodoxorum distribuit, et pauperibus large. Et ab omnibus valde celebratus est, itemque duo regna viri fortitudinis vigorem et triumphos quos consecutus est obstupuerunt et admirata sunt."<sup>263</sup>

This was the act that crowned his efforts as a soldier in the cause of Christianity and as a campaigner against the infidels. He endows the Monophysite churches and monasteries of Oriens<sup>264</sup> from the booty that he brought back from Ḥīra. This must have been gold or some precious objects suitable to give to religious establishments. Thus the Syriac contemporary source confirms what has been said by the later Muslim Arabic source, Ḥamza, on the Ghassānids as great builders, including the construction of monasteries.<sup>265</sup>

The statement that the two powers admired the exploits of Muḍīr must be essentially true. Certainly the Byzantines did when their client-king captured for the first time the capital of the client-king of Persia.<sup>266</sup> The Persian king may not have been pleased with this exploit, but he certainly heard about it and must have wondered at this thunderbolt of war,<sup>267</sup> the Ghassānid

<sup>263</sup> *HE*, p. 217, lines 27–35.

<sup>264</sup> Referred to in the text as the "orthodox," as in all Monophysite documents.

<sup>265</sup> For this see the chapter in *BASIC II* on Ghassānid structures. Muḍīr's generous gifts and endowments of Christian monasteries and churches from the booty captured from the infidels invite comparison with the same practice in Islam, as when the Ottoman sultan Sulayman the Magnificent built his famous mosque in Constantinople, now Muslim Istanbul, from the spoils of his victory over Louis II at Mohacs in Hungary in 1526.

<sup>266</sup> For the relevance of this to capturing Ctesiphon itself, see below, 409–12.

<sup>267</sup> The Syriac term that describes his exploits is stronger than the Latin rendition of it as



Munḍir. As for the Arabs in Oriens and the Peninsula, the prestige of the Ghassānids must have reached its peak after their capture of Ḥīra, the greatest Arab urban center for three centuries before the rise of Islam.

The munificence of Munḍir toward the churches and monasteries on his return to Oriens clinches the fact of his involvement in Christianity throughout his campaign. In fact it was the fifth time that John of Ephesus presents Munḍir as a soldier fighting for the cause of Christianity. It is well that the references are gathered together in this connection: (1) his Christian sentiments are reflected even before the reconciliation with Justinianus when he expresses his chagrin and grief, as a Christian, over the devastation of Roman territory by the godless Lakhmids in 573; (2) it is also reflected in his letter to Justinianus; (3) in his address to his army before the campaign against Ḥīra; and (4) in his sparing the churches of Ḥīra the destruction he inflicted on the other parts of the city.

5. The victory that Munḍir scored by his capture of Ḥīra impressed not only the two powers and the Arabs of the Peninsula but also the inhabitants of Ḥīra itself, who were the most involved. The famous Christian poet of Ḥīra, ʿAdī ibn-Zayd, who was a member of the house of Ayyūb—the diplomats in the service of the Lakhmids<sup>268</sup>—composed a poem in which he referred to the fall of Ḥīra.<sup>269</sup> Relevant are two verses in the poem, the first of which refers to the burning of Ḥīra. In Nöldeke's accurate translation it reads as follows: "Aufschwung sich ein Falk und setze ihre (Stadt) beiden Seiten in Brand; du aber dachtest an nichts als an die Kameele, die teils Nachts eingetrieben, teils im Freien gelassen werden."<sup>270</sup>

In the first verse he taunts the Lakhmid king that he was relaxing in the company of his camels while a falcon soared high and set the two sides of Ḥīra afire. Thus the Arabic verse confirms what the Syriac source says on the burning of Ḥīra and, what is more, gives a contemporary perception of Munḍir as a "falcon" for his sharp vision and for pouncing on his prey—qualities already discernible in the pages of the *HE*. And, as has been pointed out by Nöldeke, the historian Ḥamza was right in thinking that Munḍir acquired the surname *muharriq* ("the burner")<sup>271</sup> after his capture and burning of Ḥīra.

The second verse speaks of the Ghassānid cavalry and finds it at a place called al-Thawiyya, whence it fell on the ʿIbād, the inhabitants of Ḥīra, early in the morning.<sup>272</sup> The verse is informative; it makes clear that Munḍir's host,

"fortitudinis vigorem"; it is "b'ḥliṣūtā d' gabbarūtā," which may be translated "heroism"; see *HE*, textus, p. 287, line 11.

<sup>268</sup> For more on ʿAdī ibn-Zayd, see above, 315–18, on the house of Ayyūb, and below, 478–82.

<sup>269</sup> See *Dīwān of ʿAdī ibn-Zayd*, ed. al-Muʿayyid (Baghdad, 1965), 114–15.

<sup>270</sup> Nöldeke, *PAS*, 321.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 note 1.

<sup>272</sup> For the verse see *Dīwān of ʿAdī*, p. 114, verse 2. The state of readiness of the Ghassānid cavalry contrasts sharply with the camels of the Lakhmid king in the first verse, not

after marching from Oriens, reached a locality called al-Thawiyya, not far from Ḥīra. Apparently it halted there and rested during the night, but ready and bridled; it then galloped against Ḥīra and reached the city in the morning.<sup>273</sup> This is in full conformity with the Arab practice of raiding in the morning, when the adversary would be asleep or unprepared, and so the Ghassānids took the city by complete surprise.

The capture of Ḥīra provides an opportunity for making a final observation on the style of the new military leader, Munḍir, which contrasts with that of his equally redoubtable father, Arethas. The latter scored his greatest victory in 554 against his Lakhmid counterpart, Munḍir, at Chalcis. The capture of Ḥīra by his son Munḍir in 575 represents the distance traversed by the Ghassānids in these twenty years. The father was content to beat his adversary in a battle fought on Roman territory. The son, who most probably fought at the battle of Chalcis with his father, was not content with defeating Lakhmid armies. He conducts a lightning campaign that brings him to faraway Ḥīra in Persian territory, which he captures and burns in 575. And, to add insult to injury, he pitches his *praetorium* for five full days in the midst of the Lakhmid capital.

## C

For the remaining three years of the co-rulership of Tiberius, the Ghassānids are hardly ever mentioned explicitly in the sources, Greek or Syriac. But this should not be surprising. The Ghassānids receive mention in the sources mostly in a military context, but for the next three years peace reigned between Persia and Byzantium after the conclusion of the peace in 575. Although the war did not cease in Persarmenia, to which the peace treaty did not apply, Munḍir and his Ghassānid *foederati* do not appear on that front as they had before when Arethas fought there in 531.<sup>274</sup> The most plausible explanation is that the Ghassānids were needed where they were in order to guard the frontier and Oriens against possible offensives by the Lakhmids, especially in view of the crushing blows that Munḍir had administered to them in the course of the last five years. The Arabs do, however, receive mention once in the sources, during the short period that preceded the con-

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in a state ready for war; and with this, the contrast is sharply drawn between the two rulers: the lazy, thoughtless Lakhmid, and the ready, circumspect Ghassānid. In this connection, the Lakhmid ruler who reigned at this time was Ḳābūs' brother and successor, Munḍir IV, who ruled for some four years, until the accession of his more illustrious son, Nu'mān (ca. 580); see Rothstein, *DLH*, 105-7.

<sup>273</sup> The first word of this verse is variously vocalized. See Rothstein, *DLH*, 105: *wabitna*, "stayed the night," is the best; it contrasts with the verb *sabbahna* in the second hemistich of the verse, and it is more informative of the tactics of Munḍir. Before he mounts the final attack on Ḥīra, he halts and rests his horse at a place near it and in the morning falls upon the city. The halt at al-Thawiyya, incidentally, reflects Munḍir's mastery of the details of his route to Ḥīra and the topography of the area.

<sup>274</sup> See above, 142-43.

clusion of the peace, when the diplomats of the two empires were conducting the negotiations for its conclusion.<sup>275</sup> The context was that of mutual recriminations and charges concerning the violation of the peace when one party would accuse the other of having violated the peace by crossing the borders and devastating their land, while the other would return the accusation, charging that it was the other party's Arabs who crossed and devastated. In the Latin version of John of Ephesus, the accusation involving the Arabs reads as follows: "Ṭayāyē vestri transgressi in nostra terra damnum fecerunt."<sup>276</sup> The quotation reflects the place of the Arabs in the Persian-Byzantine conflict and how the Lakhmid-Ghassānid conflict was a dangerous one that could at times involve the two world powers.

#### XVII. MUNDIR IN CONSTANTINOPLE, 575

In his *Chronicle*, John, abbot of Bicular<sup>277</sup> in Visigothic Spain, records for the ninth year of Justin II's reign the visit of Munder to Constantinople and his meeting with Tiberius. He says that Munder went to meet Tiberius with his *stemma* and gifts from *barbaria* and that after being received courteously by Tiberius and presented with splendid gifts he was permitted to depart for his country: "Aramundarus Sarracenorum rex Constantinopolim venit et cum stemmate suo Tiberio principi cum donis barbariae occurrit. qui a Tiberio benigne susceptus et donis optimis adornatus ad patriam abire permissus est."<sup>278</sup>

This is an important addition to what the Greek and Syriac sources have to say on Munder's relations with Byzantium in the 570s. However, it is first necessary to determine the accuracy of John of Bicular in assigning this visit to the first half of this decade, especially as two distinguished scholars, A. von Gutschmidt and Th. Nöldeke, held divergent views on this question.<sup>279</sup> The former assigned this account of Munder's visit not to the ninth year of Justin II's reign (November 573–574), as John of Bicular states, but to 575. He must be right since it is also the seventh year of the reign of the Visigoth Leovigild, and Tiberius did not become co-ruler with Justin II until 7 December 574.

<sup>275</sup> For the chronology of the diplomatic relations between the two powers involving the truce and the peace, see Bury, *HLRE* (1889 ed.), II, 100–101. Bury counts from 576, but when the negotiations period that immediately preceded the actual inception of the peace is taken into account, one could count from 575, as does Stein, *Studien*, 62.

<sup>276</sup> *HE*, p. 232, lines 18–19. It is possible that the Persian complaint was a reference to the Ghassānid conquest of Hira in 575. If so, it is noteworthy that the Persians considered Hira their territory, "nostra terra," in that it lay in Persian territory and was the capital of their ally, the Lakhmids.

<sup>277</sup> And bishop of Gerona; see *ODB*, II, s.v. John of Bicular, and below, note 281.

<sup>278</sup> See John of Bicular, *Chronicon*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH, AA XI*, 1, *Chronica Minora* 2 (Berlin, 1893), 207–20; for the passage cited, see p. 214. Noteworthy is the orthography of the Saracen king with an *r* instead of an *l*; misspelled also in the letter to Pope Gregory where, instead of the *l*, an *n* appears; see below, 602.

<sup>279</sup> See the long discussion in Nöldeke, *GF*, 25 note 2.

Von Gutschmidt held that Mundir did indeed make a visit to Constantinople in 575, as John of Biclar says, and that the better-known visit to Constantinople, described by John of Ephesus, was the second visit, not to be identified or confused with this one. In his long footnote,<sup>280</sup> Nöldeke argued against von Gutschmidt's view and concluded that John of Biclar was thinking of the later visit in 580, described by John of Ephesus, and not of a visit in 575.

Recent research has invalidated Nöldeke's view in favor of von Gutschmidt's conclusion. Nöldeke's arguments may be stated and examined as follows.

1. John of Ephesus would not have remained silent on such a visit in 575, if it had taken place. But the circumstances under which John of Ephesus wrote his *HE* are well known, and these easily explain how he could have missed recording the visit<sup>281</sup> or he may have recorded it in the non-extant part of his work.

2. Nöldeke fortifies this by saying that if the visit had taken place, it would have drawn so much attention that echoes of it would have reached as far west as Visigothic Spain. Apparently he was unaware that echoes of the visit did not reach John of Biclar in Spain since he was still in Constantinople at the time of the visit.

3. Nöldeke's argument, however, rests on his view that it is impossible to believe that the visit took place in 575, before the plot against Mundir and the estrangement that ensued which lasted until 578. But, as has been argued above, and as E. Stein has convincingly shown, the estrangement lasted from 572 to 575, and so it is perfectly possible that Mundir made the journey then, after the reconciliation with Byzantium.

4. After referring to the two secondary sources, Bar-Hebraeus<sup>282</sup> and Michael the Syrian, Nöldeke argues that John of Biclar confused the co-rulership of Tiberius (574–578) with his sole rulership, his reign of 578–582. The truth is that John of Biclar was not confusing the two periods but was accurately dating the visit to the period of co-rulership with Justin II, which thus distinguishes this visit from the later one in 580 when Tiberius was sole ruler.

Thus the statement of the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar has to be accepted: Mundir did indeed make a visit to Constantinople in 575. The Arab king had

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> On this see John of Ephesus, *HE*, I.3, II.50.

<sup>282</sup> Who actually dates the visit to the period immediately following Tiberius' election as co-ruler in December 574, and so was right in his calculations and confirms John of Biclar. Nöldeke faulted him since he mistakenly thought the visit took place after Tiberius became sole ruler 6 October 578.

In his account of the events of the same year (575?), John of Biclar includes the Byzantine victory at the battle of Melitene, which took place in 575, according to Stein (*Studien*, 68). Bury dates it even later (576: *HLRE* [1889 ed.], II, 101). So this is additional confirmation that von Gutschmidt was right in assigning this visit of Mundir to Constantinople, not to 580 but to the mid-570s, 575.

revolted and withdrew from the service for three years (572–575); then came the reconciliation with Byzantium through the *magister militum* Justinianus, and letters were exchanged with Justin II in Constantinople. A journey to the capital, therefore, was perfectly natural and called for, especially since Mundir, after his accession and before 575, had not yet made the customary journey of the new client-king to the capital in order to be invested with the federate *Basileia*. He could not make the journey before because the first two years of his reign were occupied with furious battles against the Lakhmids, who attacked immediately after the death of his father. On the conclusion of the Lakhmid war, Mundir wrote Justin II about his victories but was rewarded with a plot to dispose of him, which was followed by three years of estrangement until 575. The reconciliation in that year is thus the most likely background for the journey to Constantinople, and the elucidation of this background has terminated the isolation of the passage in John of Biclar and proved its authenticity.

The identity of the chronicler is a further argument for the accuracy of the account. Far from being an uninformed chronicler living in faraway Spain, John of Biclar was present on the spot and was writing from autopsy. He had been educated in Greek and Latin in Constantinople, whence he returned to Spain around 576/77 after an absence of some fifteen years.<sup>283</sup> So this is a report on an event that took place while he was in the capital and on which he was well informed.<sup>284</sup> His *Chronicle* describes events from 567 to 590. A visit by Mundir to Constantinople in 580, such as described by John of Ephesus, would not have been known to him since by then he had left Constantinople and was living as an exile in Barcelona.<sup>285</sup> An event closer to John of Biclar than the visit of 580 was not recorded by him, namely, the exile of Mundir from Constantinople to Sicily in 582. So Mundir's visit to Constantinople in 575 must be accepted, and it is a solid gain from the *Chronicle*.

There remains the question of interpreting the visit. Surely after the reconciliation, the journey to Constantinople is self-explanatory in general for cementing the new friendship and the *foedus* after it was broken by Mundir's

<sup>283</sup> On John of Biclar, see L. A. Garcia Moreno, *Prosopografía del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca, 1974), 213–14.

<sup>284</sup> On the virtues and reliability of the *Chronicle*, a historian of Visigothic Spain says: "it can withstand comparison with the great chronicles of fifth-century Gaul. It is rare indeed that we can detect in it an error of fact or of judgement"; see E. A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford, 1969), 52.

<sup>285</sup> Cf. what Thompson says on his knowledge of the East after he left Constantinople: "Thus, although John of Biclarum, who returned from Constantinople to Spain, c. 576, is well informed on Eastern events for a year or two after his return, he knows very little—though his ignorance is not total—about the East during the rebellion of Hermenegild, when relations between Byzantium and Toledo were strained"; *ibid.*, 21. The rebellion of Hermenegild lasted from 579 to 586, and it is within this period that the second visit of Mundir to Constantinople took place in 580, which John of Ephesus recorded.

withdrawal from the service. But did the visit also witness the "coronation" of Mundir? The solution of the problem depends on the correct interpretation of the term *stemma* in the phrase "cum stemmate suo" in the quotation from John of Biclar. It admits of two interpretations: the more natural one, meaning a "crown," and another, meaning "genealogy"<sup>286</sup> and possibly "family."

It is not altogether unlikely that it means "genealogy," and then "members of his family," since this is attested in John of Ephesus, who, when he described the second visit in 580, mentions that Mundir had with him two sons on whom Tiberius bestowed military titles.<sup>287</sup> On the other hand, the more natural meaning for the term, especially in this context, is "crown." The *Chronicle* is speaking of the visit of a king to the emperor, and a king suggests a crown. Furthermore, the crown is mentioned by John of Ephesus in the description of the second visit, during which Tiberius conferred on him another crown, of a different (and better) description. So this implies an earlier crown with which the Arab king was endowed during an earlier visit.<sup>288</sup>

The chances are that what is involved in "cum stemmate suo" is a crown that Mundir brought with him. The reference to a *stemma* (crown) brings to mind the *aurum coronarium* of Roman and Hellenistic times. But in late antiquity, and in the middle Byzantine period, this became a form of tax and later developed into a symbolic or ritual exchange between the emperor and his subjects.<sup>289</sup> So this interpretation may be discounted.

It is much more likely that this was the traditional crown that Mundir, as a client-king, brought with him to the capital, in much the same way that the Armenian king, Tiridates, brought his with him to Rome and received it back ceremonially from Nero who crowned him.<sup>290</sup> His father, Arethas, certainly had a crown, and so presumably Mundir came to Constantinople with that crown, since he inherited it from his father as his successor. But possession of the crown meant little without recognition by the emperor in Constantinople, especially after the Ghassānid revolt. This must have been the significant aspect of the visit, especially as this was Mundir's first visit to the capital as king, after an estrangement and reconciliation. On the analogy of

<sup>286</sup> For the term as used by Latin Christian authors, see A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Strasbourg, 1954), 775.

<sup>287</sup> On this see below, 398–400.

<sup>288</sup> In support of interpreting *stemma* as crown, it may be said that its position in the second sentence after *venit*, and not before it, is in favor of this interpretation. If it meant "members of the family," it would have been more natural to say that Mundir came (*venit*) with members of his family to Constantinople, rather than he went to meet (*occurrit*) Tiberius with members of his family and gifts.

<sup>289</sup> On this see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 211–21. For Arab involvement in the *corona aurea* which the Arab *reguli* offered to Emperor Julian at Callinicum, see *BAFOC*, 113–14.

<sup>290</sup> It was a coronation as well as *appellatio regis*, since Nero, according to Dio Cassius, said, Βασιλέα τῆς Ἀρμενίας ποιῶ: Cassius Dio, *Roman History* (London-New York, 1925), VIII, p. 144, line 4.



the occasions on which the client-kings appeared in Constantinople to be recognized, this visit witnessed a "coronation" and *appellatio regis*.<sup>291</sup>

The crowns of the Byzantine emperors were of different types, and various terms are used to describe them. So the problem of identifying term and type is difficult. Byzantine coins are an excellent guide, but this method is not available for examining the crowns of Ghassānid kings, who were not allowed to mint coins. But the precious passage in John of Ephesus makes it clear that the crown in question was not what in Syriac is called *tāgā*, the more impressive and elaborate crown bestowed on Muṅḍir in 580, but the lesser one called *klilā*, most probably a circlet or band studded with jewels.<sup>292</sup> In addition to the crown, the *stemma* that Muṅḍir had with him when he went to meet Tiberius, he brought with him *dona*, "gifts," those of *barbaria*,<sup>293</sup> that is, from Arabia or Ghassānid territory outside the *limes*. What he, as an Arab king; brought with him is not clear:<sup>294</sup> perhaps luxury goods, perfumes, and spices from the fabled lands of Arabia Felix, some silks, and most probably the spoils from the Lakhmid wars and his conquest of Ḥīra. There he might have found expensive robes and silks that the Lakhmids would have acquired, since they lived in Persian territory where the silks of the Far East were available.

What Tiberius gave him in return is easier to guess by invoking the testimony of accounts of similar "coronations" of client-kings and, even more, remembering the crucial passage in John of Ephesus<sup>295</sup> that describes the more famous visit of Muṅḍir to Constantinople in 580. In addition to "symbols of rule," such as cloaks and boots, and so on, fully described in Malalas for the coronation of the Lazic king Tzath,<sup>296</sup> Tiberius would have given him gold and gifts appropriate to an Arab client-king, who, moreover, was a hardy warrior and horseman at that.<sup>297</sup>

<sup>291</sup> With B. Rubin (*Zeitalter Justinians*, 493 note 825), I believe that in the case of Ghassānid kings they were addressed as kings and there was *appellatio regis*; cf. how the Germanic kings of the Roman Occident, e.g., Theodoric, were denied this, although they were endowed with the *insignia*. These had conquered Roman territory in the West, while the Ghassānids in the East had not. Hence the reluctance of the Romans to grant *appellatio regis* to the former and their willingness to grant it to the latter.

<sup>292</sup> On the passage in John of Ephesus, see below, 399, 402–5.

<sup>293</sup> The use of the term is noteworthy, coming as it does from John of Biclar, who, being a Goth, qualifies as a barbarian himself.

<sup>294</sup> Whether Muṅḍir brought with him something as exotic as the ape (Pan) that was sent to Constantius by "the king of the Indians," as related by Philostorgius, is not clear; see *BAFOC*, 105–6.

<sup>295</sup> For this see below, 399–400.

<sup>296</sup> For this see above, 106.

<sup>297</sup> John of Biclar uses the term *adornatus* in connection with the gifts that Tiberius gave Muṅḍir. If the word here means not just "provided with" but "decorated with, adorned with," then this could be an implied reference to the crown or to some titles that Tiberius could have bestowed.

This notice by the abbot of Bicular is most valuable for reconstructing the history of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in the 570s. What John of Ephesus omitted to mention, or what did not survive of his work that treats the fortunes of Mundir in 575, was recorded by John of Bicular. Whether *stemma* means "crown" or something else is not very important. What is important is his recording of a visit of Mundir, after the estrangement and subsequent reconciliation, for the renewal of the *foedus*, and, as argued, it is practically certain that the visit was for his coronation as Byzantium's Arab client-king in Oriens.<sup>298</sup>

## APPENDIX I

## The Ghassānid Capture of Ḥīra, 575

Nöldeke thought that the verse in 'Adī's poem<sup>1</sup> referred to a capture and burning of Ḥīra by Mundir that took place in 580/81, after his quarrel with Maurice and the unsuccessful campaign against the Persians.<sup>2</sup> He based his conclusion on *HE*, VI.18. Rothstein contested this view and argued that the reference in the Arabic verse is to the capture and burning of Ḥīra immediately after the reconciliation of Mundir with the Romans,<sup>3</sup> that is, before 580/81. In a long footnote,<sup>4</sup> he argued cogently against Nöldeke's dating and drew attention to the curious fact that the latter did not notice the account of the capture of Ḥīra in *HE*, VI.4. He further argued, after a careful analysis of the two reports on Ḥīra in *HE*, VI.4 and 18, that the second is a jumbled account of events, correctly separated from one another in *HE*, VI.3 and 4. Hence he drew his conclusion on the earlier dating of the capture of Ḥīra from *HE*, VI.4, and not VI.18.

Rothstein's argument is convincing: the Arabic verse refers to the capture and burning of Ḥīra after the reconciliation in 575. In addition to his remarks, it may be said that the account of the conquest and burning of Ḥīra in *HE*, VI.4 is much more detailed and significant than that of *HE*, VI.18, since it records the fact that Mundir pitched his *praetorium* in Ḥīra for five days. It was this astonishing feat that impressed the Arab poet and elicited from him the verse in praise of the Ghassānid invader, and not the brief and less significant description of the capture and burning of Ḥīra in the second account, *HE*, VI.18. This feat is more likely to have happened in 575 than 580/81. Mundir had withdrawn from the service of Byzantium and for three years had been burning with a desire to punish his old enemies, the Lakhmids, for their raids and devastation of Roman territory, during the period of his withdrawal (572–575).

<sup>298</sup> This report in John of Bicular on Mundir's visit to Constantinople in 575 has never been commented upon, nor has its significance been pointed out. Nöldeke's prestige and his condemnation of it as a confused account of what in John of Ephesus is clearly dated and better described (namely, the later visit) has apparently disinclined scholars from according it any attention.

<sup>1</sup> See above, 382–83.

<sup>2</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 27–28.

<sup>3</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 104–5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 104 note 1.

This is the appropriate background for such an audacious operation as the capture and burning of Hīra, with which the situation in 580/81 cannot compare as a background for the offensive that resulted in the fall of the Lakhmid capital. Furthermore, in the verse of 'Adī, in which the Ghassānid and the Lakhmid rulers are contrasted, the derogatory reference to the Lakhmid is applicable to Munḍir IV, who reigned in 575, but incomprehensible if transferred to 580/81 when Hīra was possibly ruled by the energetic and formidable al-Nu'mān.

Rothstein supported his conclusion by saying that this confusion is not surprising from an author such as John of Ephesus, who himself explained how he composed his work under unfavorable conditions, and hence the repetitions and conflation that sometimes occur in his work. He further argued that it is difficult to believe that Hīra was captured and burned twice. His reasoning on this point is seductive but not entirely convincing. As he himself noted, there are differences in the two accounts of the campaign against Lakhmid Hīra, and so it is possible that Munḍir also undertook a campaign against the Lakhmids after his quarrel with Maurice around 580/81, perhaps deliberately, to prove that Byzantine arms could prosper without the latter's help. Thus the second burning of Hīra could have happened but more likely did not, and the account is simply an exaggerated or inaccurate statement made in the wake of the author's description of Munḍir's victory over his Lakhmid foe around 580.

Rothstein, however, should be corrected on one point. He mistakenly dated the conquest and burning of Hīra to after 578, following Nöldeke's dating of the interval during which Munḍir withdrew from the service and which, according to him, ended in 578. As already mentioned, Stein<sup>5</sup> corrected the period of withdrawal, dating it to 572–575. The combination of Rothstein's reasoning and Stein's chronology yields the fact that the capture and burning of Hīra took place in 575.

## APPENDIX II

### On the Name of Justin's Daughter, Arabia

The name of Justin's daughter, Arabia, is attested only in the *Patria*.<sup>1</sup> As this work of the tenth century is haunted by the ghosts of authenticity, it is necessary to discuss the name, especially since it has been endowed with some significance in a section of this chapter.<sup>2</sup>

The name has been accepted as genuine by those who have had occasion to notice it in their published work.<sup>3</sup> However, Cyril Mango has raised doubts on what the

<sup>5</sup> See above, 362 note 195.

<sup>1</sup> For the *Patria*, or the alternative title, *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum, Parts I and II*, see the edition by T. Preger (New York, 1975). For a recent and succinct statement on the *Patria*, see A. Kazhdan, *ODB*, III, s.v. For Arabia in the *Patria*, see below, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 318–22.

<sup>3</sup> Notably Averil Cameron who edited, translated, and commented on two works that involve "Arabia": Corippus' *Panegyric* on Justin II and the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*. For the former work and references to Arabia, see above, 322; for the latter, see Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition 10 (Leiden, 1984). For the references to Arabia in this work taken from the *Patria*, see pp. 49, 94, 208, 209.

*Patria* says concerning the family of Justin II when he suggested that Firmina, who had been thought to be the granddaughter of Justin (presumably through Arabia), was not such but the nurse of his daughter.<sup>4</sup> His observation does not question the name Arabia, but because of it questions are likely to be raised on Firmina's imperial nursling, too, Arabia.

A close examination of what is said about Arabia in the *Patria* and other sources reveals no reason for rejecting their testimony on the name of Justin's daughter. The name does not appear isolated and hence suspicious. It is attested in the context of accounts of statues erected for the family of Justin II, the names of which are given, and no one has contested their genuineness: Justin, his wife Sophia, his mother Vigilantia, their daughter Arabia, and Sophia's niece Helena.<sup>5</sup> Reference to these statues is also supported by what is known about Justin as an artistic patron and the many monuments he erected in Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, who in the tenth century, when the *Patria* was composed, would have thought of "inventing" the name Arabia and giving it to a member of the imperial family? The Arabs had replaced the Persians as Byzantium's secular enemy in the East, and proved to be more dangerous than the Persians had been. The name appears also in the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*,<sup>7</sup> dated earlier than the tenth century, to the period of the Isaurians. The Arabs in this earlier period were even more dangerous than in the tenth century, and the Isaurians bore the brunt of the Umayyad thrust against Byzantium, beginning with the siege of Constantinople in 717.

"Arabia" was also hardly a name to be given to a member of the Byzantine imperial family, which was sensitive to names and their connotations. One emperor originally named Tarasicodissa became Zeno; another gave up Sabbatius and became Justinian. Athenais became Eudocia. Procopius had animadverted on the name of a member of this very house of Justin, the founder of the dynasty, when he commented on the indecorous name of Justin's wife, Lupicina.<sup>8</sup> "Arabia" is a singularly unimperial name, and its choice in the atmosphere of intense hostility toward the Arabs in the *Islamic* period as the given name of a princess is simply inconceivable.

Especially relevant is the testimony of one who was a contemporary, Corippus. He wrote the panegyric on Justin II and remembered Arabia in his work, without mentioning her name. In one of the verses that describe Arabia, he says of her in relation to her mother, Sophia, "nomen distabat et aetas."<sup>9</sup> The statement is surely noteworthy. A daughter is expected to have a name different from that of her mother,

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication; see above, 319 note 45, and C. Mango, "Byzantine Inscriptions of Constantinople: Bibliographical Survey," *American Journal of Archaeology* 55 (1951), 63. The name "Arabia" is accepted as Justin II's daughter in *PLRE*, III, s.v.

<sup>5</sup> *Patria*, para. 35, p. 38; para. 62, p. 184; para. 37, p. 229; lines 20–24, p. 230.

<sup>6</sup> On this see Averil Cameron, "The Artistic Patronage of Justin II," *Byzantion* 50 (1980), 63–84.

<sup>7</sup> *Parastaseis*, pp. 17–29, where the editors date it to the early 8th century; but see A. Kazhdan's entry on the *Parastaseis* in *ODB*, III, s.v., where he calls the 8th-century dating into question.

<sup>8</sup> See above, 49.

<sup>9</sup> See above, 322.

and so the daughter's name should not have attracted the attention of the poet. But it did, and the fact strongly suggests that the name sounded so strange to the poet that he found it necessary to comment on it. The verb *disto* may also mean "it is distant," in addition to "different." And nothing could be as distant (*distans*) or different from the good Greek name Sophia than the name Arabia.<sup>10</sup>

If there is no reason for rejecting the authenticity of the name Arabia, the fact remains that it was a strange name to be applied to a Byzantine princess. A section in this chapter has explained the historical circumstances that attended the application of the name to the princess, related to the pro-Arab and pro-Monophysite stance of Theodora, who was a friend of the Arab phylarch of Arabia, the Ghassānid king and protector of Monophysitism in Oriens. In addition to what has been said there, the following observations may be made concerning the choice of this particularly foreign name.

Noteworthy is the fact that the name was Arabia and not one related to the Saracens, such as Saracena or Saracenis. In the Byzantine consciousness, the Saracens, not the Arabs, were the enemies, the nomads who made it their business to raid the oriental *limes* of the empire. The Saracens were barbarians whose image was like that of the others, such as the Germans and the Slavs, and even worse in the consciousness of the *ecclesia*, since they raided monasteries and killed monks in Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, and Chalcidicē.

"Arabs" and "Arabia," on the other hand, did not have that connotation. Although the term "Arabs" almost superseded "Saracens" in the Islamic period when it was demoted as the Muslim Arabs became the principal enemies of Byzantium, yet in the world of the sixth century, it was not so. The term connoted the Rhomaioi of the Provincia Arabia and the sedentaries of South Arabia, the fabled land of the ancient world, associated with perfume and frankincense, and, what is more, known by the auspicious name Arabia Eudaimon/Felix. Two of the most revered saints of this period, Cosmas and Damian, were referred to as Arabs in the celebration of their feast.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Arabia Felix was now a Christian country, an ally of the empire, and most importantly for the ex-Monophysites, Justin and his wife, the country of the Christian Monophysite martyrs of South Arabia. The universal Church celebrated the feasts of its martyrs on 24 October, and one of them was an Arab woman martyr called Ruhayma. Finally, it was Byzantium that sent the fleet which made possible the Ethiopian Christian victory in South Arabia in the 520s, and it was sent by the namesake of Arabia's father, the founder of the imperial house, Justin I.

<sup>10</sup> That Corippus also refers to her age does not invalidate this argument on the strangeness of the name that attracted the poet's attention. The point in referring to her age as different from that of her mother is part of the "praises of Arabia," namely, her youth, which the poet wanted to highlight and which also attracted his attention. So it is consonant with the "praises of Arabia" in a list that precedes and follows this verse or part of a verse on name and age. This leaves her name as the only item in the list that does not praise but simply expresses difference or distance, the only dissonant or at least neutral note in the laudatory passage. Hence its crucial relevance to the argument of this Appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Justin and Sophia erected a church in honor of the two saints, Cosmas and Damian; see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*, 1.3, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 294-95.

These are the images that the name Arabia evoked in sixth-century Byzantium when Justin's daughter was born: Christian, Byzantine, allied to the empire, country of martyrs, specifically Monophysite martyrs, Felix/Eudaimon. Thus the name was not unworthy of an imperial personage and a child of Monophysite parents. The *Patria* is a work in which fact and fiction are curiously mixed, but the name "Arabia" does not belong to the latter category.



## V

### The Reign of Tiberius (578–582)

Tiberius started his independent reign in September 578 and died in August 582. These four years witnessed the extremes in the fortunes of the Ghassānids.<sup>1</sup> Mundīr reached the pinnacle of his power and glory in 580 when he visited Constantinople, was crowned again by Tiberius, and was hailed as the secular leader of Monophysitism in the Orient. A year later he was betrayed and transferred to Constantinople where he was put under house arrest. The fortunes of the Ghassānids fluctuated with those of their king, and thus the Ghassānid supreme phylarchate and *Basileia*, which had been established a half century before by Justinian, foundered, at least for a few years. The reign of Tiberius thus becomes crucial for the study of Ghassānid history. What happened to the emperor, the good emperor, who had been well-disposed toward his Arab allies, and what finally eroded his confidence in the Ghassānids and led to their downfall?

#### I. SOPHIA AND MAURICE

The full answer to this complex question will unfold in the course of the following chapters on the reigns of Tiberius and Maurice, and relates to both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*, Constantinople and the provinces. These introductory observations, however, will discuss only the erosion of support for the Ghassānids in the capital, occasioned by the changes in the imperial household and entourage involving Sophia and Maurice.

After maintaining a powerful and pervasive presence during the previous four years, Sophia begins to disappear from the political scene in the capital with the death of Justin and the assumption of sole rulership by Tiberius.<sup>2</sup> Thus was severed the last bond that linked the Ghassānids to Theodora<sup>3</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> For the reign of Tiberius II relevant to the Arab allies of Byzantium, E. Stein, *Studien zur Geschichte des byzantinischen Reiches vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus II und Tiberius Constantinus* (Stuttgart, 1919) is still the standard work. For a discussion of *Kaiserkritik* of these two emperors, see Averil Cameron, "Early Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*: Two Case Histories," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3 (1977), 1–17.

<sup>2</sup> See Averil Cameron, "The Empress Sophia," *Byzantion* 45 (1975), 16–21. These pages also record some traces of what remained of her presence in the capital.

<sup>3</sup> Also the new imperial family, represented by Tiberius and Maurice, had no blood rela-

imperial patronage. In this connection, the judgment of J. B. Bury is both perceptive and apposite on the role that Sophia might have played in the history of Byzantium in the latter half of the sixth century. Bury was thinking of that role for the reign of Justin II, but what he says is also applicable to that of Tiberius:

Sophia had the ambition, without the genius, of her aunt Theodora. Like her, she had been originally a monophysite. But a bishop had suggested that the heretical opinions of her husband and herself stood in the way of his promotion to the rank of Caesar; and accordingly the pair found it convenient to join the ranks of the orthodox, on whom they had before looked down as "synodites." It is perhaps to be regretted that Sophia was not content to induce her husband to alter his opinions and to retain her own faith. The administration of an orthodox Emperor and a monophysitic Empress had worked well in the case of Justinian and Theodora; the balance of religious parties had been maintained, so that neither was alienated from the crown. It is probable that if Sophia had remained satisfied with One Nature, the persecution of monophysitic heretics, which disgraced the latter half of Justin's reign, would not have taken place, and the eastern provinces would have been less estranged from the central power.<sup>4</sup>

As Bury was unaware of the significance of his historical "might-have-been" to the Ghassānids, it is well that the judgment of that critical Byzantinist, expressed almost a century ago, has been resuscitated and placed in this new context.

Even as Sophia was fading as a political force, Maurice was making his entry into the corridors of power in Constantinople. His emergence spelled disaster for the Ghassānids as he finally succeeded in weaning Tiberius from the support he had extended to his Arab allies. The story of Maurice and the Ghassānids will become apparent in the course of this volume, but a brief resumé of the basis of the antipathies between the two parties may be given here as an introduction to the following sections.

Maurice was a Chalcedonian and considered the Monophysites heretics. This, of course, included the Ghassānids, who from his Roman viewpoint were also barbarians. As a soldier, to whom the military manual, the *Stratēgikon*, is ascribed, he placed no confidence in the *foederati*, whom he considered unreliable and treacherous allies. He did not get along well with them during their military operations. The conflict with the Ghassānids was thus

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tionship to the house of Justin. Tiberius was the adopted son of Justin II and Sophia, and Maurice married his daughter, Constantina.

<sup>4</sup> Bury, *HLRE* (1889 ed.), II, 71.

inevitable. Although for years Tiberius had preserved his independent, favorable judgment on the Ghassānids, he could not altogether ignore the wishes of Maurice. The latter was his *magister militum per Orientem*, appointed to that post with plenipotentiary powers in 577, and thus he had the ear of the emperor. Tiberius finally succumbed to the protestations of Maurice on Ghassānid loyalty to the state and gave in to his *magister militum*, who was also soon to become his successor<sup>5</sup> and son-in-law.

## II. THE PERSIAN FRONT, 578–580

The three-year peace settlement, made in 575, expired in 578, the same year that Tiberius acceded to the throne. The Persian war flared up again, and its front remained active until the Peace of 591. Did the Ghassānid *foederati*, seasoned troops that had been consistently victorious against the Lakhmids during the 570s, participate in the general war against Persia? The primary sources, both Greek and Syriac—Menander and John of Ephesus—are silent on this point, and the implication may be that the Arabs did not participate in the war with Persia from 578 to 580. But it should be remembered that portions of the *HE* have not survived, and Menander's account of this period has survived only in fragments. Hence Arab participation may have been recorded in these two primary sources but may have been lost. In view of the outstanding military record of Muḍir and the Ghassānids against the Arab allies of Persia, Byzantium would have been anxious to enlist their services. Confirmation of this could come from later sources (e.g., Michael the Syrian) that have preserved echoes from earlier ones. This was the conclusion of E. Stein, who in his usual penetrating manner argued for Ghassānid participation under Muḍir in the war of this *biennium*.

Of the campaign of 578, Stein says that Maurice advanced against Singara and conquered that fortress and that Muḍir and his Arabs participated in this military effort.<sup>6</sup> He qualifies his conclusion by saying "vielleicht," but in the annotation<sup>7</sup> he argues more confidently: in view of the good relations between Muḍir and the Byzantines, after his reconciliation in 575, Muḍir's participation is almost self-evident ("fast selbstverständlich"). This is supported by a statement in Michael the Syrian: "Mauric[i]us rassembla de nouveau les armées des Romains avec Mondar et les Ṭaiyayê leurs partisans, et ils envahirent les contrées des Perses. Ils (les) brûlèrent, et (les) pillèrent; ils prirent de nombreux captifs et des richesses et s'en retournèrent."<sup>8</sup> Stein points

<sup>5</sup> Ironically, it was Sophia who recommended Maurice to Tiberius as successor; Cameron, "Empress Sophia," 20.

<sup>6</sup> See Stein, *Studien*, 75.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 86 note 17.

<sup>8</sup> *Chronique*, II, 323, para. 5.

out that this statement in Michael is dated 889 of the Seleucid Era, which may be rendered better as A.D. 578 than A.D. 579. This amounts to saying that this campaign took place before that of 580, when Mundir and Maurice campaigned together and quarreled. Hence it should be considered a separate, joint expedition. Finally, he points out that this statement on the joint expedition of Mundir and Maurice, as well as the one following it in the year 889 of the Seleucid Era, do *not* derive from John of Ephesus. Again, in speaking of the summer campaign of Maurice in 579, in Mesopotamia, he says that we have to assume the participation of Mundir in this campaign, too.<sup>9</sup>

Stein reasons more cogently than persuasively in this argument. Not much more can be added to it, except the following data from John of Ephesus, which are relevant, especially as Stein says that Michael the Syrian does not derive in this matter from John of Ephesus. When describing Maurice's recruitment of troops in the province of Henzit, in Anatolia, John of Ephesus says that he did so after his arrival there from Syria: "et e Syria cum illuc pervenisset."<sup>10</sup> This makes certain that Maurice had visited the regions south of the Euphrates, exactly where Mundir was. There is another relevant statement in the same chapter in the *HE* that involves Syria. After describing the Persian devastation in the region of Amid and their withdrawal, John of Ephesus says that Maurice entered Syria in pursuit of them.<sup>11</sup> It is difficult to believe that this could have happened without some involvement on the part of the Ghassānids, the defenders of the *limes*.

There is a third passage in the *HE* which might throw light on this problem. It is on the recruiting activity of Maurice in preparation for his campaign against the Persians. John of Ephesus says that he was followed to the field by the *excubitores*, of whom he had been count before his elevation to the *magisterium Orientis*, and also by the *scribones*.<sup>12</sup> He recruited in Asia Minor from Cappadocia and from the region of Henzit (Anzatene) in Armenia. This could imply that he did not enlist in his service troops from Oriens, the *foederati*, the Arab Ghassānids of Mundir. But not necessarily; in Anatolia he was enlisting fresh recruits, while the Ghassānids were already enlisted as *foederati* and considered part of the army of Oriens.

In addition to John of Ephesus, there is a statement in a Greek source

<sup>9</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 91.

<sup>10</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 251, lines 9–10. Henzit is Anzitene in Armenia IV; see A. H. M. Jones, *Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Oxford, 1971), p. 542, table xxxii, no. 10.

<sup>11</sup> *HE*, p. 251, line 35; p. 252, lines 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> The *excubitores* were palace guards and a crack fighting force, and the *scribones* were imperial bodyguards; see Jones, *LRE*, I, 658–59. *Excubitores*, especially *scribones*, had a role in recruiting, and so their presence could indicate possible recruiting in this region of Oriens at that time.

which should be included in the discussion. Theophylact Simocatta wrote a detailed history of Emperor Maurice and yet is silent on Ghassānid participation in the war. This is, however, a different silence from that of John of Ephesus who may have been uninformed on this or whose account has not survived. Theophylact was no admirer of Muḍīr and was completely indisposed toward him since he outrightly considered him a traitor in his campaign of 580. And so his silence may be considered deliberate obliteration of Muḍīr's participation, especially as Muḍīr is likely to have distinguished himself in the campaign and Theophylact wanted to obscure this.<sup>13</sup> One of his phrases in describing the campaign of 578, however, could suggest Arab participation. He refers to Arabia into which Maurice marched and which he devastated: τοῖς τῆς Ἀραβίας χωρίοις.<sup>14</sup> "Arabia" in this phrase is certainly Bēth-ʿArabāyē, and Maurice is most likely to have called on the Arab client-king, Muḍīr, for participation in a campaign that entailed invading Bēth-ʿArabāyē, whose climate, terrain, and inhabitants were not alien to Muḍīr and his Arab *foederati*.<sup>15</sup>

Stein's conclusions on the participation of Muḍīr and his Ghassānids in the Persian war of Tiberius' reign in 578–580 have to be accepted. The various sources that have been laid under contribution both express and imply that conclusion. In addition to its being a gain in filling a gap in the activities of the Ghassānids for this two-year period, Stein's conclusions serve a more important purpose. In the *HE*, Muḍīr suddenly appears in 580, after an absence of some five years from the military scene, campaigning with Maurice with whom he quarrels, and the quarrel ultimately leads to his downfall. Although many causes can be assigned to explain what was a strange turn for the worse in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in 580, the events of this *biennium* contribute one more important cause for explaining the quarrel between the two commanders. Friction could easily have developed concerning the conduct of the war; the one was a hardy desert warrior who had been fighting in the area for years, and the other a newcomer to both the area and warfare. When they meet again in 580 in the campaign against Ctesiphon, the seeds of disagreement had already been sown. Hence the quarrel of 580 is now relieved of its isolation as this *biennium* provides the necessary background for its eruption.

### III. THE GHASSĀNID CROWN: CONSTANTINOPLE IN 580

Two passages in the *HE* of John of Ephesus provide valuable data on the Ghassānid crown that Muḍīr received from Tiberius in the winter of 580.

<sup>13</sup> On Theophylact and the Arabs, see below, 594–97.

<sup>14</sup> *Historiae* (Teubner ed.), p. 143, lines 14–15.

<sup>15</sup> Before him, his father, Arethas, had campaigned in those outlying, northern parts of the Land of the Two Rivers.

Unlike the passage in the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar, these two in John of Ephesus are detailed, concrete, and not isolated from the context to which they belong. The two passages have been unceremoniously treated, although they deserve serious consideration for the light they shed on important aspects of Byzantine history during the reign of Tiberius. Such an analysis is now made all the more necessary by the realization that the passage in John of Biclar on the Ghassānid crown should not be confused with the two in John of Ephesus, but that it records an earlier visit to Constantinople by Muḏīr in 575 and the receipt of an earlier crown. This first visit in fact contributes substantially toward a better understanding of the second visit recorded by John of Ephesus.

The context within which the two passages are set is stated by John of Ephesus.<sup>16</sup> Emperor Tiberius invites Muḏīr to visit Constantinople in order that he may use his influence to bring about a reconciliation between the party of Jacob and that of Paul, the two Monophysite leaders. Muḏīr arrives in Constantinople on 8 February and makes every effort to act as a conciliator between the warring parties, including the Egyptian delegation and its leader Damian. On 2 March he convenes a conference of the two parties and effects the reconciliation, after which he asks the emperor for leave to depart from the capital.<sup>17</sup>

1. The first passage describes the splendid reception accorded to Muḏīr on his arrival in Constantinople and speaks of the magnificent gifts that Tiberius gave him and the honors accorded to him. Specifically mentioned are the military titles conferred on his two sons and the permission to wear a royal crown: "Adventus vero gloriosi Mondir anno 891 mense šebāṭ, die 8° eius factum est, qui pompa magna et honore infinito a rege misericorde Tiberio receptus est, qui eum xeniis et muneribus magnis, et donis regiis honoravit, et quidquid volebat ei fecit, et quidquid rogavit ei dedit, itemque filiis eius duobus qui eum comitabantur dignitates donavit, et diademate etiam regio eum dignatus est."<sup>18</sup>

2. The second passage is longer and more detailed. It describes the liberality of Tiberius and his gifts after the conference of 2 March, when Muḏīr asked Tiberius to let him leave and had a promise from him that he would bring to an end the persecution of the Monophysites, and stated that for his part he would bring peace to the church. John of Ephesus specifies these gifts:

<sup>16</sup> *HE*, p. 164, lines 17–19: "cum gloriosus Mondir patricius ad regem vocatus ascendisset et magnifice receptus esset."

<sup>17</sup> For these ecclesiastical matters involving the Monophysites in Constantinople, see *BASIC* I.2, 900–908. For the two dates, 8 February and 2 March, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 164, line 29 and p. 165, line 4. Plans for the visit must have been made in the autumn of 579 since Muḏīr arrived in Constantinople on 8 February 580. The journey from Nisibis to Constantinople by the state post took 103 days; see *De Ceremoniis* (Bonn ed.), I, 400.

<sup>18</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 164, lines 28–34.



gold and silver, magnificent garments, saddles, bridles of gold, and armor. The most important honor and gift was permission to wear a royal crown which had been denied to previous Arab kings or princes, who were allowed only the coronet or circlet.

Post haec vero gloriosus Mondir obsecravit ut ipse etiam dimitteretur, et regem misericordem de pace ecclesiae etiam obsecravit, et ut Christianorum persecutio conquiesceret. Qui ei cum iureiurando promisit se, si a bellis inquieturus esset, pacem statim facturum. Itaque hac promissione *data* eum cum magnis honoribus dimisit, et donis regiis auri et argenti multi et vestibus splendidis, et ephippiis et frenis multis argenteis et armis. Et praeter haec omnia diadema etiam regium ei donavit, quod usque ad hunc nullis regibus Ṭayāye umquam fuerat nec datum erat, sed nonnisi coronam tantum sumere eis fas erat.<sup>19</sup>

One would be inclined to think that the royal gifts were given on but one occasion. Yet a careful examination of the two passages shows that there were two occasions: the first on his arrival and the second just before his departure. The anxiety of Tiberius, who had invited him to come for the union and peace of the church, explains this. He rewarded him on his arrival as a reflection of his desire to enlist his services, and then after the achievement of Muṇḍir at the conference of 2 March he again rewarded him as an expression of his gratitude and satisfaction with that achievement. One item the two passages share—reference to the crown. Surely there was one crown given to Muṇḍir, and that was just before his departure, and it is in the second passage that the detailed reference to the crown is included. So he must have been speaking proleptically when he referred to the crown in the first passage.

The first passage is distinguished from the second by reference to the two sons of Muṇḍir. How many sons Muṇḍir had is not clear, but he had at least two.<sup>20</sup> There is no doubt that one of them was Nuʿmān, who succeeded him after his fall for a short time, and he must have been the eldest. Muṇḍir must have brought him along, as his own father had brought him to Constantinople in 563. Muṇḍir had reigned for some eleven years, and although he was to live for at least some twenty more, it is possible that he was already thinking of the problem of succession. So he brought Nuʿmān with him.

The Latin version has *dignitates* as the object of *donavit*—what Tiberius gave the two sons of Muṇḍir. This renders the Syriac word *aṣṣlah*, the *aphʿel*

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 168, lines 22–32. There is a slight inaccuracy in the Latin version of E. W. Brooks: instead of *argenteis* in line 29 read *aureis*. The Syriac original is clear on this point. See *HE*, textus, p. 224, line 27.

<sup>20</sup> Two more sons and a daughter are mentioned later on, when he was put under house arrest; see below, 461–63.

form of the verb *flab*, a root that means *inter alia* "to do military service."<sup>21</sup> In this context the verb most appropriately means that Tiberius gave them military titles or decorations and possibly functions. Since they were already phylarchs, each with the rank of *clarissimus* or *spectabilis*, Tiberius most probably raised their military ranks to the honorary one of *gloriosissimus* (Gr.: ἔνδοξότατος). This receives confirmation from a Greek inscription that refers to Nu'mān as both στρατηλάτης and ἔνδοξότατος since the term *stratēlatēs* translates *magister militum*, which Nu'mān, as phylarch, certainly was not. So the rank and title in the inscription must have been honorary, and the passage in John of Ephesus could solve the mystery of the application of the term to the Ghassānid phylarch Nu'mān in the inscription.<sup>22</sup>

More important than the first passage in John of Ephesus is the second one with its three categories of gifts. The first category consisted of *much* gold and silver and splendid vestments; these are in apposition to the Syriac term<sup>23</sup> *dashnê d' malkûthâ*, gifts of kingship/kingdom, and naturally suggest the royal fashion according to which they were presented. That gold and silver were presented to Mundir should cause no surprise. Although he was no doubt handsomely paid with the *annona foederatica*, he needed money for his many benefactions; furthermore, it was gold that was the bone of contention between him and Justin II when he wrote to him in 572 after his victory over the Lakhmids asking for gold in order to recruit more troops. The generous Tiberius thus gave him much of the two precious metals in order to assure him that the new *imperator* was different from the previous one. As to the splendid royal robes and vestments he gave him, these could have been expensive and luxurious ones for which Constantinople was famous, but quite possibly were more than that; they may have been part of the paraphernalia and insignia of kingship, the new kingship that he was endowed with by Tiberius.<sup>24</sup>

The second category consisted of military gifts: saddles, bridles of gold,

<sup>21</sup> For the Syriac verb, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 220, line 1. For the meaning of *aflab*, "to grant military decorations," see *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, ed. J. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1957), 448.

<sup>22</sup> For the Greek inscription, see below, 505. Another Greek inscription refers to the sons of Mundir as *gloriosissimi*, ἔνδοξότατοι. But this inscription is undated, and so it is not clear whether it was set up before or after 580; for this inscription, see below, 495.

<sup>23</sup> For the Syriac original, see *HE*, textus, p. 224, lines 25–26.

<sup>24</sup> The same Syriac phrase for "splendid vestments" (*lbūshê mshabhê*) is used to describe the royal robes of the Persian king Chosroes in John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 299, lines 2–3. If these were official costumes and robes befitting the new *Basileia* or the crown he was endowed with, they may have approached those worn by the *imperator* himself; for a description of these robes or imperial costumes, military, civil, and consular, see P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C., 1968), II.1, pp. 70–80. These pages treat the period slightly after Tiberius, beginning with Phocas and Heraclius. For the robes of the client-kings and chiefs, which Mundir's father, Arethas, probably had, see the section on Arethas and the quotations from Procopius on the Armenians and the Mauri, above, 106, and below, Appendix I.

and armor. These were appropriate gifts for a soldier such as Mundir was, and especially for a horseman.<sup>25</sup> They must have been expensive saddles and bridles, made of gold, trappings to be used ceremonially rather than functionally in war. The same applies to the third item, armor. This must have included decorative swords, spears, shields, and breastplates.<sup>26</sup>

The most important of the gifts was, of course, the crown Tiberius gave him. This was a new type of crown. The Latin version renders it *diadema regium*, a good enough translation. But in Syriac it is "the crown of kingship or kingdom": *tāgâ d' malkûthâ*.<sup>27</sup> The old and inferior type of crown that Mundir wore is called in Latin *corona*, but in Syriac<sup>28</sup> *klîlâ*.

The passage brings out clearly the subordinate position of the client-kings to the Byzantine *autokrator* since the wearing of any crowns on their part could only be done by express permission of the former. Finally, the new crown is described as a type that had never been allowed before to the kings of the Arabs, that is, those who were clients of Byzantium. These details are all relevant for understanding important aspects of Ghassânid-Byzantine relations when these reached their climax in 580, a year that saw them at their most harmonious.

The *klîlâ* is the first of the two Syriac terms used by John of Ephesus to describe the two types of crowns involved in the *insignia* of Mundir. The student of the problem of *insignia* in Syriac is faced with the same problem as in Greek—the various terms and types used. But it is possible to arrive at some fairly certain conclusions from references in some Greek authors. The *klîlâ* was most probably a band that encircled the head and was studded with jewels, such as the kings of the Armenians and the chiefs of the Mauri were allowed to wear by Byzantium. To this may be added the royal headgear of Tzath, the Lazic king of the reign of Justin I, a coronet or circlet that Arethas<sup>29</sup> wore and that Mundir himself must have worn in 575 when he appeared in Constantinople for the renewal of the *foedus* after his reconciliation with Justin II.

The *tāgâ d' malkûthâ* is more difficult to describe since, unlike the *klîlâ* of the client-kings, there is no description of it in the sources and the bald statements in John of Ephesus are all there is to go by. However, the terms with which the ecclesiastical historian describes it suggests that it may have approached the royal diadem used by the Byzantine emperors themselves,<sup>30</sup> a

<sup>25</sup> Such gifts could imply Tiberius' recognition of the performance of the Arab cavalry in the Lakhmid-Ghassânid wars.

<sup>26</sup> The stirrup is conspicuous by its absence; on this, see below, 577.

<sup>27</sup> For the Syriac phrase, see *HE*, textus, p. 224, line 28.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224, line 30.

<sup>29</sup> For descriptions of the coronets and circlets that the Armenians, Mauri, and Tzath wore, see above, 105–6 with note 223, and Appendix.

<sup>30</sup> The coins are the best guide for what the crowns and diadems looked like; for those of Tiberius, see A. R. Bellinger, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection*

conclusion that could receive some confirmation when the significance of this second "coronation" of Muḍir is presently discussed. Perhaps Tiberius permitted the Arab client-king to wear a crown not unlike his own, the Byzantine imperial diadem, because "under Tiberius II the diadem with Pendilia became a rather elaborate 'crown' without any helmet and had a frontal circular ornament surmounted by a cross."<sup>31</sup> So, if Tiberius effected a change in the style of the diadem, and advanced it to become a "crown," it is possible that he allowed the Ghassānid king to wear something that looked like the *old* Byzantine imperial diadem but not the new crown. In this connection it is noteworthy that the term used to describe the new crown of Muḍir, *tāgā d' malkūthā*, is the one that is invariably used by John of Ephesus to describe the Byzantine imperial crown itself.<sup>32</sup>

More important than determining the type of crown that Muḍir received from Tiberius in 580 is to arrive at a correct understanding of the significance of the emperor's decision to confer this crown on Muḍir.

1. Fortunately, and unlike John of Biclar, who gives no clue whatsoever to the background or context for the "coronation" of 575, John of Ephesus does give ample information on these matters. The first datum is the fact that Muḍir did not come of his own accord to Constantinople but was invited there by Tiberius.<sup>33</sup> The emperor was anxious to have the Ghassānid king in

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*and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C., 1966), I, pls. LX–LXV; description and commentary, pp. 264–90. The coins also show his cuirass and paludamentum, versions of which he may have given to Muḍir.

<sup>31</sup> See Grierson, *Catalogue*, p. 81. Also relevant is the discussion of the difference between a tied and an untied diadem in this period, which thus became a "crown"; *ibid.* For a comparison of the crown of Tiberius with those of other emperors such as Justinian, Maurice, and Heraclius, see *ibid.*, p. 82. The emperors did not share the diadem and the imperial crown with others; so the "crown" or "diadem" granted to Muḍir could not have been exactly the same as the Byzantine imperial crown, however similar it may have been.

<sup>32</sup> The same words, *tāgā d' malkūthā*, are used to describe the Byzantine imperial crown of Tiberius; see John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 131, line 8; p. 133, line 27; p. 138, line 10; p. 139, line 4.

Various terms are used to describe various types of crowns, and so the identification process is uncertain in the Greek sources as well as in the Syriac and Arabic; hence the difficulty of arriving at a correct description of the Ghassānid crowns. Even the distinction between *στέμμα* and *στέφανος* as conceived by the editor of the *De Ceremoniis* has been invalidated; see *Le livre des cérémonies*, ed. A. Vogt (Paris, 1935–39), I, 25, and G. Vikan, *ODB*, II, s.v. marriage crowns.

In Arabic poetry, the Ghassānid king is often referred to as a "crowned king," "he who has a *tāj* (crown)," "dū al-tāj," "the possessor of the *tāj*." But hardly ever is there a description of it. The two terms *klilā* and *tāgā* are known to these pre-Islamic Arab poets, and one of them, al-A'shā, employed both of them in a couplet describing Hawḍa ibn-'Alī, a client-king of Sasanid Persia in northeastern Arabia. He speaks of his *akālil* (plural of *iklil*, Arabic for Syriac *klilā*), which had rubies in them and also a *tāj* (Arabic for Syriac and Persian *tāgā*). For these two verses, see *Dīwān al-A'shā*, ed. M. Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1950), 107.

<sup>33</sup> See below, note 59.

Constantinople in order to enlist his help in the implementation of his ecclesiastical policy of uniting the various factions of the Monophysites who had assembled in Constantinople, and also of finally uniting the Monophysites and the Dyophysites through an acceptable formula. The Ghassānid king did not disappoint him since he acted zealously and manfully to effect the desired reconciliation, and his efforts were crowned with success<sup>34</sup> at the council held on 2 March 580. Then, in conformity with his generous nature and liberal policy of rewarding performance in the service of the state, and in order to express his appreciation for the achievement of Muḍīr, Tiberius conferred on him the right to wear the *tāgā d' malkūthā*, and in so doing bound him even more to the service of Byzantium. The higher-grade crown that he bestowed on him clearly reflected that a superior soldier-statesman such as Muḍīr was to be the wearer of a superior crown.

2. Related to his achievement in reconciling the two warring Monophysite parties of Paul and Jacob is the possibility that Tiberius came to realize in 580 during the months when the Monophysite factions were present in Constantinople that Muḍīr was not only a Ghassānid leader but had a larger significance not only in Oriens but also in Egypt and the whole of the Monophysite East. Only Muḍīr in the Byzantine world could bring peace to the Monophysite church and to Byzantium. The whole of the Ghassānid dynasty had solidly backed Monophysitism from the very beginning, early in the century. His father, Arethas, had staunchly supported it for some forty years, and was instrumental in resuscitating the confession and its hierarchy around 540. And his son Muḍīr continued this tradition in the ten years<sup>35</sup> since he succeeded his father in 569. As Tiberius was anxious that the reconciliation should not be temporary but lasting, he may have wanted to enhance the prestige among the Monophysites of the one who had brought it about, by bestowing an exceptional honor on him—the crown. Although Tiberius would not have wanted to see in the Monophysite world within Byzantium an *imperium in imperio*, it is just possible that he conceived of that world ecclesiastically as such and in this light conceived the Ghassānid king Muḍīr as its king. In Tiberius' perception, Muḍīr ceases to be only a Ghassānid king but actually the king of the much wider Monophysite world in Byzantium. As such he deserved a crown commensurate with this status, the *tāgā d' malkūthā* he conferred on him, which brought him closer to the emperor who was the head of the Dyophysite world. In so doing, he commended Muḍīr to the respect and appreciation of the Monophysite world which he, Tiberius, was anxious to win over.

<sup>34</sup> On all this, see *BASIC* I.2, 900–908.

<sup>35</sup> On this, see *ibid.*, 755–75.

3. One should recall the military achievements of Munḍir against the Lakhmids in the course of the decade. His superior achievement in ecclesiastical affairs was matched by his superior performance on the battlefield against the Lakhmids—a marked advance even over that of his redoubtable father. Although the latter had decisively turned the tide against the Lakhmids in the Ghassānid-Lakhmid war by his victory at Chalcis in 554, Munḍir improved even on this, when he carried the war from old boundaries to new frontiers and actually captured, sacked, and burned Ḥīra, the capital of the Lakhmids. John of Ephesus was principally an ecclesiastical historian, and his narrative of the events in Constantinople, encompassing Munḍir and the coronation, is presented in the strict context of ecclesiastical history. But from the point of view of the *imperator* Tiberius, of which John of Ephesus may or may not have been aware, Munḍir was also the talisman of victory against the Lakhmids, and his superior performance in that arena needed and deserved appropriate recognition. Hence the conferment of the extraordinary *tāgâ d' malkūthâ* on Munḍir, who deserved well of both the *ecclesia* and the *imperium*.

4. Related to his successful wars against the Lakhmids is his performance against the Persians, both indirectly through his successes against their clients, the Lakhmids, and directly in the field against the Persians themselves.<sup>36</sup> Ctesiphon, their capital, was a military target for the Byzantine army of Oriens; almost immediately after the conclusion of the Council of Constantinople on 2 March 580, Munḍir scored a smashing victory over the Lakhmids and shortly after marched with Maurice against the Persians with Ctesiphon as a military objective. Now such a plan must have matured earlier than 581, and so it is natural to assume that it was in the mind of the high command in Constantinople in 580 when Munḍir paid his visit to Tiberius.<sup>37</sup> It is not altogether impossible that Tiberius was thinking of Munḍir as the future conqueror or co-conqueror of Ctesiphon when he conferred on him the *tāgâ d' malkūthâ* in much the same way that other commanders in the service of Rome had been endowed with an extraordinary title before they warred against the great king. One of them was Hannibalianus, the cousin of Constantine the Great, who was given the title king of kings,<sup>38</sup> and, even more relevant, the Arab Odenathus, the prince of Palmyra who, too, was pitted against Shāpūr I

<sup>36</sup> The Persian war had broken out again after the expiration of the three-year truce. For the role of Munḍir in this war, see the preceding section.

<sup>37</sup> As will be discussed below, 408–11.

<sup>38</sup> Hannibalianus was certainly *rex*, and was made such by Constantine in the context of the Persian-Byzantine hostilities of A.D. 335. Whether or not he was also called *rex regum* is immaterial in the present context; see the excellent discussion in E. Chrysos, "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ," *DOP* 32 (1978), 36–38.



and recaptured Mesopotamia.<sup>39</sup> If so, the *tāgâ d' malkûthâ* is likely to have been a counterpoise to that of the great king himself.<sup>40</sup>

It is impossible to determine with certainty which of the preceding motives was paramount or even operative with Tiberius when he conferred on Mundir the *tāgâ d' malkûthâ*. All that can be done is to take into consideration the immediate antecedents and the circumstances during which the conferment took place and relate it to them. Whatever the truth may be, there is no doubt about the importance of the conferment of the *tāgâ d' malkûthâ*, vouched for by the primary source, John of Ephesus, who says that it had not been conceded to any Arab king before Mundir: "quod usque ad hunc nullis regibus Tayāye umquam fuerat nec datum erat." This recalls Procopius' statement on the *Basileia* of Arethas, the extraordinary one conferred by Justinian around 530: such a thing had never been done by the Romans (οὐ πρότερον τοῦτο ἔν γε Ῥωμαίοις γεγονὸς πώποτε).<sup>41</sup> Both statements testify to the place of the Ghassānid dynasty in Byzantium's scheme of things as the most important of all the series of *foederati* that the empire had in the Orient during the three centuries from Constantine to Heraclius.

#### IV. THE CAMPAIGN OF CTESIPHON, 580/81: THE ANTECEDENTS

The crucial year of the reign, however, was 580/81; its events were truly momentous in Arab-Byzantine relations. That year witnessed a Byzantine campaign that targeted none other than Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sasanids, while its extraordinary events ultimately led to the arrest and exile of Mundir and a fundamental change in the course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. In this sense the year turned out to be the most important one in the annals of

<sup>39</sup> In the context of their war against Persia, the Romans conferred the title *dux Romanorum* and *corrector totius Orientis* on Odenathus, the Arab prince of Palmyra in the 3rd century. According to a bilingual *miliarium* erected during the reign of his son, he was also "king of kings." For the exchange between the present writer and E. Chrysos on this point, see Chrysos, "Title," 51–52, and Shahîd, "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 291–92. It is noteworthy that A. H. M. Jones, whom Chrysos quotes on Palmyra (*ibid.*, 51 note 141), accepts the assumption by Odenathus of the title "king of kings"; see *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1950), s.v. Odenathus.

In addition to what has been said by the present writer on the unlikelihood of the posthumous extension of the title "king of kings" by Odenathus' son to his father (*op. cit.*, 291–92), one may invoke the Christian formula that Heraclius assumed in 629: πιστός ἐν Χριστῷ. In the inscription of the famous novel, it is the *father* who associates the son with the new title, and both Heraclius and his son appear in the novel as πιστοὶ ἐν Χριστῷ βασιλεῖς. See the present writer in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *DOP* 26 (1972), 295–320. Whether Odenathus' son had the title "king of kings" during his father's lifetime is not clear and is irrelevant.

<sup>40</sup> See below, Appendix I.

<sup>41</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.47.

the Ghassānids. The following sections will, therefore, treat all its dimensions, including its antecedents and sequel. These consist of the immediate antecedents of the campaign while Mundir was still in Constantinople in the winter of 580; his campaign against the Lakhmids immediately after his return from the capital; the joint expedition with Maurice against Ctesiphon; the retreat from Ctesiphon to Callinicum; the estrangement between the two commanders, Maurice and Mundir; the latter's second and final campaign against the Lakhmids after his return from the joint expedition; the arrest of Mundir in Oriens and his transference to Constantinople; and the *prodosia* charge against Mundir.

The sources for the history of this year are both Syriac and Greek. The first are Monophysite sources friendly to Mundir; the latter are Dyophysite ones relentlessly hostile to him, even accusing him of treachery to the cause of the Romans. The former consist mainly of the account of John of Ephesus, the only writer among both sets of sources that wrote a detailed account, an account that makes the course of events intelligible. From him derive all later Syriac sources, which are thus secondary and add little or nothing, with the exception of the *Chronicon Anonymum*.<sup>42</sup> In contrast to John of Ephesus, the Greek sources are disappointing in the coverage they give to the events of the year. They are represented by Evagrius, Theophylact Simocatta,<sup>43</sup> who depended on John of Epiphania for his account, and Menander, whose work has survived only in fragments, one of which possibly deals, however obliquely, with the joint expedition.<sup>44</sup> But the accounts of Evagrius and Theophylact do contain some valuable data on the joint expedition not to be found in John of Ephesus, an ecclesiastical historian who was not primarily interested in secular history. The Greek sources are also important for examining the charge of *prodosia* against Mundir.

<sup>42</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, ed. and trans. J. B. Chabot, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, vol. 14, versio, pp. 164–65.

<sup>43</sup> See Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. J. Bidez and L. Parmentier (London, 1898); *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1972); to these two may be added the late church historian Nicephorus Callistus, who derives his notice of Mundir from Evagrius: see *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PG 147, cols. 336, 348. For a translation and commentary of Theophylact Simocatta, see Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1986); for a study of Theophylact and the emperor on whose reign Theophylact wrote his *History*, see Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian* (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>44</sup> As noted by his editor, R. C. Blockley, on Fragment 23.11, *The History of Menander the Guardsman* (Liverpool, 1985), pp. 214–16; for his note, see p. 283 note 292. John of Epiphania wrote a very brief account of events before the Persian revolt against Hormuzd, and so he could not have written with great detail on the campaign against Ctesiphon; see Whitby, *Emperor*, 222; the same is probably true of Menander. Both historians were partial to Maurice and must have mentioned the campaign only briefly since it did not reflect well on Maurice.

### The Immediate Antecedents

That Ctesiphon was targeted in the joint expedition of 580/81 is explicitly stated in John of Ephesus and clearly implied in Theophylact.<sup>45</sup> Such an ambitious campaign, with its goal the capital of the Sasanids, could not have been planned by Maurice alone and on the front. It must have been planned and discussed at the highest level in Constantinople with the emperor himself, and indeed the visit of Mundir to the capital that winter can be shown to be related to it. But this needs to be argued for, and luckily there are enough data to make the work of reconstruction possible.

### A

1. The course of events in Sasanid Persia itself is the background against which the argument must be set:<sup>46</sup> Chosroes had died in February–March of 579 after ably guiding the affairs of Persia during his long reign of forty-eight years. His son Hormuzd celebrated his accession by either executing his brothers or having them blinded, and there was dissension and tension within the Persian realm,<sup>47</sup> reflected at the beginning of the reign by the episode of the Persian imposter who masqueraded as a son of Chosroes and a claimant to the throne and who invoked the assistance of Tiberius for the overthrow of Hormuzd and the occupation of Ctesiphon with Byzantine help.<sup>48</sup> The fact that he turned out to be an imposter did not change the fact that Tiberius, who had high hopes of using him, must have entertained the possibility of executing the plan. An obvious historical parallel from the recent past could only have encouraged Tiberius to think along these lines. In the fourth century the Persian prince Hormisdas defected to Constantine and served his son, Constantius, and his nephew, Julian. The last actually had Hormisdas accompany him during his Persian campaign which envisaged the capture of Ctesiphon.<sup>49</sup> That such dreams on the part of the Byzantine *autokrator* were not unrealistic is proved by what happened toward the end of the reign of

<sup>45</sup> See John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, p. 129, lines 20–22. As noted earlier, all references to the *HE* of John of Ephesus are to the volume in CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, generally the Latin version; the Syriac text is referred to only when necessary. The Latin version of John of Ephesus on Ctesiphon reads as follows: “Quamobrem, dies aliquot progressi donec e regione Bêth Arâmâyê pervenerunt, qua est urbs regis Persarum”; p. 129, lines 20–22. In Theophylact, reference to Ctesiphon is clearly implied since he speaks of a march or drive from Circesium in Mesopotamia through the Arabian desert to Babylonia, where Ctesiphon was; see Theophylact, *Historiae*, p. 146, lines 7–8.

<sup>46</sup> For a succinct account of this background, see R. Frye in the *Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge, 1983), III.1, 162–64.

<sup>47</sup> See Theophylact, *Historiae*, 144–45.

<sup>48</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, 253–54.

<sup>49</sup> On Hormisdas, see *RE*, VIII.5, col. 2410, s.v. Hormisdas 3, and *BAFOC*, 55, 62, 67, 119.

Hormuzd, when the tensions within the Persian realm finally enabled Bahrām Chūbīn,<sup>50</sup> the rebel general, to bring about the deposition of Hormuzd in 590. Shortly after, Byzantium came to the rescue of the legitimate heir, Chosroes Parviz, and effectively interfered in the internal affairs of Persia to the point of helping Chosroes regain the throne.

2. Then there were the personal relations of the two rulers, Hormuzd and Tiberius, which were ruffled by Hormuzd's arrogance. John of Ephesus mentions two slights that the former administered to Tiberius personally:<sup>51</sup> first he did not condescend to send Tiberius the usual symbols of his succession to the throne, according to the established usage of the two empires, and then he treated the Roman ambassadors who had been sent to his father so abominably, going to the length of throwing them in prison. He also responded to all Tiberius' overtures to bring about peace between the two world powers with unreasonable demands, so that negotiation for ending the war proved unsuccessful.<sup>52</sup> This, together with the recent Byzantine success in the summer campaign conducted by Kurs<sup>53</sup> against them, could also have encouraged Tiberius, already affronted by Hormuzd, to succumb to the temptation of dealing the arrogant shah a deadly blow in his own courtyard, and so military hostilities resumed again with Maurice's campaigns.

3. It is not altogether impossible that Maurice himself, the new *magister militum per Orientem*, was also interested in an expedition that targeted Ctesiphon. He had taken over the *magisterium Orientis* from a distinguished general, Justinianus, the victor of Melitene, and so he may have wanted to equal or surpass his predecessor and may have been encouraged to entertain such ambitious plans, misled by his successes on the Persian front in the preceding year, 579. If he read Procopius on the Persian wars,<sup>54</sup> he would have found that Belisarius, according to the historian, could have captured Ctesiphon during the Assyrian campaign some forty years before.

## B

Theophylact associated Mundīr in the joint expedition with Maurice against Ctesiphon. This took place shortly after Mundīr appeared in Constantinople in the winter of 580, and he must have been involved in the strategy of the campaign against Ctesiphon that was being hatched in Constantinople.<sup>55</sup> In support of this the following may be adduced.

<sup>50</sup> For the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn and the Byzantine involvement in it, see Frye, *op. cit.*, 163–65; also Whitby, *Emperor*, 292–304, where the account is based on Theophylact.

<sup>51</sup> *HE*, 243–44.

<sup>52</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae*, 145–46.

<sup>53</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, 252–53.

<sup>54</sup> Procopius, *Anecdota*, II.25.

<sup>55</sup> Stein's perspicacity understood this; see *Studien*, 92.

1. John of Ephesus attests his presence in Constantinople<sup>56</sup> from at least 8 February to 2 March in the winter of 580. John is silent on any activities concerning the projected campaign against Ctesiphon, but this is far from being decisive. As an ecclesiastical historian, John was passionately telling the story of the heroic efforts of Munḍir to bring about peace within the Monophysite ranks between the followers of Jacob and Paul in Constantinople;<sup>57</sup> he therefore either did not know of other activities of Munḍir or, if he knew of them, was not interested in recording them. A similar situation obtained in 563 when Munḍir's father, Arethas, visited the capital. Theophanes is completely silent on the activities of Arethas in behalf of Monophysitism and only speaks of his arranging the question of succession. But it is well known from an incontestable Syriac document that Arethas did engage in activities in behalf of Monophysitism, and even a letter has been preserved, written by him concerning the election of Paul to the Monophysite see of Antioch.<sup>58</sup>

2. Munḍir was actually *invited* to come to Constantinople by the emperor.<sup>59</sup> Tiberius was of course interested in the composition of differences in the Monophysite camp, but could not have been interested in that only. The followers of Jacob and Paul were mostly not in Constantinople; there were only a few exiled bishops there, who were joined by a third party, that of the Alexandrian Monophysites under Damian. So Tiberius must have also had in mind problems other than the Monophysites, and this most probably was the problem of involving Munḍir in the forthcoming campaign against Ctesiphon itself.

3. Tiberius knew Munḍir well since 575 when the latter was finally reconciled to Byzantium through Justinianus and came to Constantinople with his crown and met Tiberius. Tiberius was fully aware of the military prowess of the Ghassānid king and his outstanding military record against the Persians and their allies, the Lakhmids, which he demonstrated throughout the decade. Moreover, the campaign against Ctesiphon—the most ambitious that Byzantium had mounted in the century—would involve crossing the Arabian desert,<sup>60</sup> a terrain and climate more suited to the training and style of Munḍir and his *foederati* than any other unit in the Byzantine army of the Orient. Tiberius also had at his disposal the military dispatches from Oriens on Munḍir, which recorded that he invariably defeated the Lakhmids soundly, even captured their capital, not far from Ctesiphon. It is impossible to believe

<sup>56</sup> *HE*, p. 164, line 29; p. 165, line 4.

<sup>57</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 900–908.

<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, 782–88.

<sup>59</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 164, lines 17–18.

<sup>60</sup> On the march of Munḍir and Maurice through Arabia in Mesopotamia, see Theophylact, *Historiae*, p. 146, lines 7–8.

that he would not have thought of Munḍir as the ideal co-general with Maurice in the forthcoming campaign. And it would not be surprising if Munḍir himself broached the topic of Ctesiphon with Tiberius since, of all the Byzantine commanders of the period, he was the one who came closest to the capital of the king of kings, when he captured and burned that of the vassal Lakhmid king, Ḥīra.<sup>61</sup>

4. It is also significant that Munḍir brought with him two of his sons,<sup>62</sup> who were no doubt already distinguished phylarchs in the Byzantine army of Oriens and who had fought alongside their father, just as Munḍir had, in the style of the Ghassānids who went to battle as a family. The presence of these two military figures would have been irrelevant to a journey whose goal was composing differences among the various Monophysite factions in the capital. So the invitation extended to the three Ghassānid warriors to come to Constantinople must have envisaged more than John of Ephesus knew or was interested in reporting.

5. Mention might also be made of the splendid gifts that Tiberius gave to Munḍir and his sons.<sup>63</sup> To the latter he gave military titles, presumably promoting them in the military hierarchy, while to Munḍir he gave the royal diadem. It is difficult to believe that such honors were not related to the prospective campaign against the Persians.

6. Finally, it would be tantalizing to think that Tiberius had some historical recollection of the part played by another Arab in which the conquest of Ctesiphon was involved. In the third century, Odenathus of Palmyra was entrusted by Gallienus with the conduct of the Persian war against Shāpūr I, whom he defeated and whose capital, Ctesiphon, he nearly captured. A large-scale history of the period of Odenathus was written in Greek: Nicostratus the Sophist of Trapezus wrote a history of Rome from the reign of Philip the Arab until that of Odenathus of Palmyra.<sup>64</sup> This historian is mentioned by Evagrius,<sup>65</sup> who wrote his history in the latter half of the sixth century, and the presumption is that these works were also available in Constantinople. So it is not impossible that Tiberius may have been acquainted with them and may have

<sup>61</sup> On Munḍir's strategy and his possible involvement with Ctesiphon, see below, 414, 418–19, 435–37.

<sup>62</sup> On the two sons who visited the capital with their father, see above, 400.

<sup>63</sup> See above, 401–2.

<sup>64</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 218, line 31–p. 219, line 2.

<sup>65</sup> Dexippus must also have written about Odenathus. Evagrius mentions him immediately after Nicostratus as one who has written at great length on the period that ended with the reign of Claudius (A.D. 265–270); see Evagrius, *HE*, p. 219, lines 2–7. He thus must have written copiously on Odenathus, since his history covered a short period on a large scale. Only fragments of his *Scythica* and *Chronica* have survived. See L. Dindorf, *Historici Graeci Minores* (Leipzig, 1870), I, 165–200; for Dexippus, see *RE*, V, cols. 288–93. For more on Munḍir and Odenathus, see below, 425, 437–38.



thought of Mundir as a sixth-century Odenathus, and also of his predecessor in the purple, Gallienus, who had to fight Rome's Persian wars through the Arab prince.

Perhaps the preceding paragraphs have shown that, although John of Ephesus does not explicitly say that Tiberius discussed the campaign of 580 with Mundir in Constantinople, the emperor must have done so. Curiously enough, a much later Syriac chronicle that goes down to A.D. 1234 does state it explicitly. In one of the chapters of that chronicle,<sup>66</sup> Tiberius chides Mundir for not taking part in the war against the Persians, and the latter answers by showing him the letter that Justin II had written to Maurice with instructions to kill him. This suggests that the chronicler confused the events of 575 with those of 580. On the other hand, the following paragraph, which is related to this one, clearly speaks of the campaign of 580. This is the same chronicle that also mentions the return of Mundir from exile in 602, a datum that is now verifiable,<sup>67</sup> which enhances the level of the chronicle's historicity. So it is possible that the paragraph in which Tiberius chides Mundir is a conflated one, with some elements telling of earlier events. At any rate, the paragraph ends with Mundir promising to prosecute the war against the Persians: "et promisit Mundarus se strenue contra Persas dimicaturum."<sup>68</sup>

### C

Immediately after his return from Constantinople, Mundir conducted a lightning campaign against the Lakhmids.<sup>69</sup> These had heard of his absence in Constantinople and had hoped for a prolonged stay there. Hence they<sup>70</sup> took advantage of this absence and invaded his territory, hoping to attack "his sons and brothers" and capture or slaughter them. Before they could accomplish this, Mundir, with his customary speed and secrecy, fell upon them and almost annihilated them, and "very few escaped from his sword." The ecclesiastical historian adds that he brought back many spoils and gained a great reputation by this last campaign: "et magis ab omnibus celebratus est, et nomen eius magno opere laudatum est."<sup>71</sup>

The passage in John of Ephesus reflects the great prestige of Mundir and

<sup>66</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 164, line 27–p. 165, line 2.

<sup>67</sup> On the return of Mundir from exile in 602, see below, 618–22.

<sup>68</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 165, lines 1–2.

<sup>69</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 169, lines 9–19; unnoted by Nöldeke, *GF*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> The text reads "the Persians and the Ṭayâyê (Lakhmid Arabs)," "Persae et Ṭayâyê." I am inclined to think that *d* should be read in the original Syriac (as earlier in the passage), rather than *wa* ("and"). Those who attacked Mundir's territory were thus not "the Persians and the Arabs" but "the Persian Arabs," i.e., the Lakhmids. For the Syriac "the Arabs of the Persians," see *HE*, textus, p. 225, line 13; for the phrase "the Arabs and the Persians," see *ibid.*, line 15.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, versio, p. 169, lines 18–19.

the fear he inspired in the Lakhmids, who could think of attacking his territory only while he was away. Interesting is the fact that the Lakhmids marched "into his territories in order to attack his sons and brothers." The Lakhmids attacked Ghassānid, not Roman, territory;<sup>72</sup> and the attack targeted members of his family, testimony that he had brothers and sons other than the two he had with him in Constantinople. The sentence also reflects the strength of Ghassānid family ties. The phrase "few escaped from his sword"<sup>73</sup> is most probably literally true and reveals Mundir not as a spearman but as a swordsman. The Arabs considered the latter more valorous than the former.

#### V. THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign<sup>74</sup> of 580 went through three phases: the advance against Ctesiphon, the retreat to the north, and military operations in Mesopotamia.

#### A

1. Maurice and Mundir agreed to invade Persian territory simultaneously, and their forces effected a junction at Circesium on the Euphrates where the Roman army assembled. Thence the expedition became an amphibious operation that involved a Byzantine fleet, which sailed down the Euphrates, presumably carrying provisions for the Byzantine army, among other things. While the fleet sailed down the river, the land army marched along the right bank of the Euphrates. Noteworthy is the statement in the *Chronicon Anonymum* that it was Mundir that led the Byzantine army, which was composed of Romans and Saracens.<sup>75</sup>

2. The first port of call on the Euphrates was the Persian fort of <sup>ε</sup>̄Anat, the Anathon of Theophylact, where raged the first battle of the campaign. The Byzantines boarded their ships and attacked the fort from their positions

<sup>72</sup> The exact phrase is "in regionem et terram eius"; in Syriac, "li-atreh-wa li-ar'eh" (ibid., textus, p. 225, line 15). The phrase may be added to the many in Greek on strictly Ghassānid, not Roman, territory, mentioned in the sources; see above, 313–14.

<sup>73</sup> "Cum pauci eorum eius gladium effugissent et evanissent"; ibid., versio, p. 169, lines 16–17.

<sup>74</sup> The traditional year for the campaign is 580. It is possible that it was in the spring/summer of 581. For the two opposing views, see Blockley, *Menander*, p. 283 note 292, and Whitby, *Emperor*, notes for pp. 271–73. I have combined both years, 580/81, as the date of the campaign, which thus comprises both the period of preparation for it in Constantinople and the actual fighting that followed.

Nöldeke mistakenly calls Maurice κόμης Ἀνατολῆς, that is, *comes Orientis*; *GF*, 27. He must have been misled by John of Ephesus who often refers to Maurice simply as *comes*, presumably because he had described him as *comes excubitorum* before his elevation to the *magisterium Orientis*; see John of Ephesus, *HE*, VI, chap. 27, p. 25, line 34; p. 251, lines 18, 35. The *comitiva Orientis* had lapsed, according to Jones, in the 540s; see his *LRE*, I, 281. Aigrain followed Nöldeke and called Maurice during his campaign "le comte d'Anatolie"; see "Arabie," col. 1214.

<sup>75</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae*, III.17.5–6; *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 165, lines 3–4.

on the river. The Persians fought back with stones from their engines, their *balistae*, and as a result many in the Byzantine army were drowned in the river. This precious datum on the battle of ʿĀnat has been preserved in only one source, the Syriac *Chronicon Anonymum*. It bears the stamp of authenticity, since ʿĀnat was the first natural battlefield for a Byzantine-Persian encounter in a campaign that was amphibious, progressing down the Euphrates from Circesium.<sup>76</sup>

3. The army and the fleet continued their advance down the Euphrates after the battle of ʿĀnat. The sources cease to be specific on toponyms, but John of Ephesus, the main source, is helpful enough, although he omits mention of the battle of ʿĀnat. He states that Maurice and Munḍir marched together for several days until they reached a spot on the Euphrates opposite the region of Bēth-Arāmāyē, in which was located the royal city of the Persians, that is, Ctesiphon. The account of John of Ephesus and the precious reference in Theophylact to the Byzantine fleet that accompanied the land army make clear the Byzantine plan of advance against Ctesiphon, which was to reach a site on the Euphrates that was on the latitude of Ctesiphon within striking distance of it. What that site was is not clear; after ʿĀnat, the next port of call was Anbār, the Abbaron of Theophylact, which might have been the spot, or even a site further south.<sup>77</sup>

4. When the Byzantine expeditionary force reached that location, it found destroyed the bridge that Maurice had hoped to cross in order to invade Bēth-Arāmāyē and capture Ctesiphon. It was only natural for the Persians, who must have guessed what the Byzantine army was after, to have destroyed the bridge, and this is categorically stated by John of Ephesus. Maurice and the Greek sources thought otherwise and accused Munḍir of having forewarned the Persians, who thus destroyed the bridge as a result of Munḍir's treachery. This was the turning point of the campaign, which thus came to an inglorious end and was the beginning of the estrangement between the *magister militum* and the Ghassānid king.<sup>78</sup>

The Persians also out-generated the Byzantines by sending one of their talented commanders, Adarmahan, to cut the retreat line of Maurice by opening a campaign in the north in Mesopotamia. This forced Maurice to scrap any further plans against Ctesiphon or the Persians in the region of the middle or lower Euphrates and order a retreat back to the north.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 4–9.

<sup>77</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 129, lines 20–23, and p. 237, lines 10–14; Theophylact, *Historiae*, III.17.10. On the latitude of Ctesiphon on the Euphrates, see Stein, *Studien*, 92.

<sup>78</sup> The Greek sources are silent on the bridge; but the Syriac sources mention it, most clearly the contemporary John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 129, lines 22–23, and p. 237, lines 12–15.

## B

The second phase of the campaign begins with the Byzantine army's retreat north to Mesopotamia, where the Persians had attacked Edessa and marched against Callinicum.

1. As Maurice had to hurry back with all speed to protect Byzantine Mesopotamia from the Persian threat, he had to order the burning of the fleet which could not keep up with the forced march he had ordered. This of course presented logistical problems, especially for provisioning the retreating army along the right bank of the Euphrates, this time northward and with no grain ships to support the land army, through an arid desert.<sup>79</sup>

2. For the march back to Callinicum in Mesopotamia, Evagrius, hostile as he is to Muṣṭar, is useful in providing some data, which are important, once his bias against Muṣṭar is taken into account. In a brief chapter on the expedition, in which there is no reference to a bridge, he simply says that the expedition failed because Muṣṭar refused to cross the Euphrates in order to support Maurice against the Persian Saracens, who were stationed along the left bank of the river. In spite of this brief and confused account, his statement may be construed to be pertinent *not* to the military situation that obtained when Maurice found the bridge destroyed but to that of the retreat and the march back to Circesium and Callinicum. Clearly the Lakhmid contingent in the Persian army, which had crossed over to the left bank in face of superior Byzantine forces, was harassing the retreating army. Muṣṭar could not and would not cross the Euphrates for fear of being encircled by his inveterate enemies, the Lakhmids, who were thirsting for revenge after they had been beaten so many times by him. Muṣṭar's refusal must have exacerbated the bad feeling between him and Maurice. Evagrius also adds a statement on the fleetness of the Arab horse and its indispensability for fighting the Persian Arabs who had equally fast horses.

John of Ephesus, too, emphasized the difficulties the retreating army encountered but spoke in general terms of the "great fatigues." It is, thus, Evagrius who endows the account with specificity when he refers to the hardships the Byzantine army endured from harassment by the Lakhmids, who were shadowing the retreating army from across the Euphrates. This hardship is measurable by the fact that the "Scythian" contingent in the army, commanded by Theodoric, did not even venture within range of the arrows that were aimed at them by the Lakhmids from the other side of the Euphrates and so took to flight together with their commander.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae*, III. 17.8–11.

<sup>80</sup> See Evagrius, *HE*, V.20. This is the main contribution of Evagrius to the history of this

## C

The final phase of the campaign consisted of the military operations in Mesopotamia that involved the Persian offensive under Adarmahan, who had attacked Edessa, where he killed, captured, and burned, and then marched to Callinicum which Maurice rushed to defend. Theophylact records a victory for Maurice over the Persians, while John of Ephesus says that there was no engagement after the Persian general decamped and slunk away. The truth must lie between the two accounts.<sup>81</sup> If Callinicum was not a resounding victory, it did force Adarmahan to retreat. What is relevant here is the participation of Mundir. Both Syriac sources testify to the presence of Mundir cooperating with Maurice in these operations. While John of Ephesus attests his presence twice, the *Chronicon Anonymum* gives prominence to Mundir at the expense of Maurice, who is not even mentioned. Mundir rushes to Callinicum to meet Adarmahan and scores a victory over him, and many Persians are killed; and it was fear of Mundir that forced the Persian commander to retreat. The account thus exaggerates the role of Mundir, but it is important evidence for the prominent part he played in the campaign.

## VI. SOME PROBLEMS OF THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign of 580/81 presents many problems, three of which are the most important: Did the Byzantine army cross the Euphrates and march through Bēth-Arāmāyē against Ctesiphon? Did Maurice retreat alone to Mesopotamia or was he accompanied by Mundir? What was the role of the Lakhmids, the allies of Persia?

## A

None of the sources, Syriac or Greek, explicitly say whether the Byzantine army marched along the right or left bank of the Euphrates, a silence that has made some scholars assume that it crossed the Euphrates and so moved from the right to the left bank of the river.<sup>82</sup> It will be argued that the Byzantine army never crossed from the right to the left bank of the Euphrates throughout the length of the march from Circesium to the farthest point south that it reached on the river. This is clearly implied in both John of Ephesus and Theophylact, who, in describing the march of the army from

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campaign—the description of the retreat. Mundir probably fought at Callinicum with extra zest since he must have heard from his father, Arethas, about the earlier battle of Callinicum in 531 when the latter stood his ground after the flight of the Phrygians and Isaurians.

<sup>81</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae*, III.17.10–11; John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 238, lines 6–19; *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 165, lines 14–19.

<sup>82</sup> This was Merten's view, against which Stein rightly warned in *Studien*, 101 note 4. But this view needs to be countered by a detailed argument, since it is an important feature of the campaign.

Circesium, speak of passing through “the way of the desert” and “the desert of Arabia.” Arabia in this context cannot be Bēth-ʿArabāyē in the north in Mesopotamia but must mean the Arabian Peninsula to the west of the Euphrates.<sup>83</sup> This is also clear from the fact that the first military engagement between the two contestants was at Anat on the Euphrates. The description of the battle in the *Chronicon Anonymum* makes it clear that the Persians were on the left side of the river and the Byzantines on the right.<sup>84</sup>

When John of Ephesus describes the last phase of the advance against Ctesiphon, he describes the bridge over which the Byzantine army was to pass into Bēth-Arāmāyē as “the great bridge.” This surely implies a bridge over the mighty Euphrates and not over an insignificant affluent or tributary or one of the canals that intersected the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates near Ctesiphon.<sup>85</sup> Speaking of this last phase of the advance against Ctesiphon, Theophylact says that Maurice was forced to burn his fleet, which strongly suggests that the Byzantines were on the Euphrates and not across it.<sup>86</sup>

The text in John of Ephesus which speaks of Bēth-Arāmāyē may have caused this confusion, but a close examination of it in Syriac makes it clear that this is not what John meant. The crucial statement is the one that says they reached a spot “opposite Bēth-Arāmāyē.” Now Bēth-Arāmāyē is northwestern Babylonia and comprises the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates within which Ctesiphon was located. “Opposite it,” Syriac *lūqbal*, makes certain that the spot that the Byzantine army reached was still on the right bank of the Euphrates.<sup>87</sup> This is corroborated by the further statement that the Byzantines hoped by crossing over the bridge to subdue the large or wealthy cities on the opposite side. These were across the Euphrates and on the Tigris, and not west of the Euphrates. The Latin text of John of Ephesus is worth quoting verbatim: “cum ad pontem magnum Bēth Arāmāyē pervenisent, quo se transgressos urbes magnas regias Persarum expugnaturus esse confidebant.”<sup>88</sup>

<sup>83</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 237, lines 9–10; Theophylact, *Historiae*, III. 18.6.

<sup>84</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 165.

<sup>85</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 237, line 12. For Musil’s speculation on the location of the bridge, see his *Middle Euphrates* (New York, 1927), 232. This volume is still valuable for the historical toponymy of the Euphrates region, involving sites associated with the campaign of Ctesiphon in 580/81, such as Anat.

<sup>86</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae*, III. 17.10

<sup>87</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 129, line 21. The term “opposite” is very clear in the Syriac original of John of Ephesus; see *HE*, textus, p. 174, line 2. For Bēth-Arāmāyē between the Tigris and the Euphrates, see the accurate map of M. Morony in *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Princeton, 1984), 336.

<sup>88</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 237, lines 12–14. The text speaks of “urbes magnas regias” in the plural. I am inclined to think that the phrase should be read in the singular as in *HE*, p. 129, line 22, and that the diacritical marks in the Syriac original are wrong. There was only



## B

Theophylact gives the impression that, after the failure of the expedition against Ctesiphon and the burning of the fleet, Mundir like a drone disappeared and that Maurice beat a retreat to Mesopotamia alone, where he also won the battle of Callinicum without the participation of Mundir. This has led some scholars to think that this was the case. It will be argued that Mundir did in fact accompany Maurice in his retreat all the way to Callinicum.<sup>89</sup>

1. The statements in John of Ephesus make this clear. In his account of the retreat he refers four times to Mundir as accompanying Maurice. Of both he says that they finally reached Roman territory after great fatigues: "et vix infractis animis se servare et ad terram Romanorum exire potuerunt."<sup>90</sup> Again he refers to both of them three times when describing the military situation in Mesopotamia where the Persian general Adarmahan sensed that Mundir and Maurice were going to attack him after he had ravaged Osrhoene and the district of Edessa.<sup>91</sup>

2. This is also corroborated by the testimony of Evagrius, unfriendly as he was. In his short chapter on this campaign, in which he complains of the *prodosia* of Mundir as having frustrated Maurice's military efforts, he says that Maurice asked Mundir to cross over and fight the Lakhmid Arabs who were harassing the Byzantine army. The statement and the context can only refer to that phase of the campaign when Maurice was retreating north after having burnt his fleet.<sup>92</sup>

3. The *Chronicon Anonymum* not only confirms that Mundir did retreat with Maurice but also clearly states that Mundir took an active part in the battle of Callinicum and, what is more, that he was the principal protagonist

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one royal city or capital, Ctesiphon on the Tigris, and this corroborates the view that the Byzantines were still on the right bank of the Euphrates. For the Syriac original, see *HE*, textus, p. 312, line 21. Concerning the employment of the plural in "urbes magnas regias," it is possible that this reflects the fact that Ctesiphon was composed of so many urban units and suburbs that the Arabs referred to it by the plural Madā'in (plural of *madīna*, "city").

<sup>89</sup> So understood by Harry N. Turtledove in *The Immediate Successors of Justinian*, Ph.D. diss. (University of California at Los Angeles, 1977), 311. Theophylact certainly gives the impression that Mundir disappeared, but John of Ephesus, in the passage which Turtledove quotes, does not say that. The English translation, however, misled him: "Maurice and Mundir returned to their respective territories." The Syriac original has "territory" in the singular, and so does the Latin version: textus, p. 313, line 9; versio, p. 237, line 29. This should be construed as their territory, that is, the land of the Byzantines, Bēth-Rōmāyē, as opposed to that of the Persians. The other passages in John of Ephesus confirm this and make amply clear that Mundir accompanied Maurice during the retreat. Whitby is silent and noncommittal on this point: *Emperor*, 273.

<sup>90</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 237, lines 18–19.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238, lines 6–19.

<sup>92</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 216, lines 6–9.

in this Persian-Byzantine encounter. This is an exaggeration, and the excision of Maurice from the account is as biased as the exclusion of Munḍir in the account of the battle as given by Theophylact.<sup>93</sup>

4. In spite of the monstrous accusations leveled against him, Munḍir was a loyal Christian soldier who performed his duties toward the Christian Roman emperor. As he had already been the object of an imperial Byzantine intrigue in the early 570s, he would have been especially careful to fulfill his military obligations to his superior and not lay himself open to the accusation that he was a traitor who defected after the failure of the expedition. He was especially singled out for participation in the campaign against Ctesiphon because it was to cross through terrain familiar only to him, and he led the Byzantine army safely through difficulties until the bridge. After the failure of the expedition, Munḍir would have felt especially bound to lead the frustrated Roman army back to Roman territory as he had led it from Circesium. Failure to have done so would have laid him open to the charge of military desertion when the empire needed him most.

### C

The role of the Persian Arabs, the Lakhmids, repeatedly beaten by the Ghassānid Munḍir throughout this decade, and thus thirsty for revenge, must have been considerable. They must have contributed substantially to the failure of the Byzantine expedition. The march of the Byzantine expeditionary force from Circesium through the Arabian desert must have been through or bordering on territory under the control of the Lakhmids, that of the middle Euphrates; "normally the territory of the Lakhmid kingdom consisted of the region west of the Middle Euphrates from Ḥīra to Anbār, Baqqa, and Hīt, including 'Ayn al-Tamr and Quṭquṭāna on the edge of the desert."<sup>94</sup> This is the world of the Arabian desert west of the Euphrates, where the Lakhmids lorded it over the tribes and controlled the area and guarded it for Persia.

In the face of the superior force assembled by Byzantium consisting of both the Byzantines and the Ghassānid Arabs, the Lakhmids must have been forced to cross over to the left bank of the river.<sup>95</sup> They must have fought at the battle of Anat and must have continued to harass the Byzantine army during its advance down the line of the Euphrates. This is possibly implied in the account of John of Ephesus, who speaks of the great fatigues of the Byzantine army before it reached the great bridge. And it was probably the Lakh-

<sup>93</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, p. 165, lines 14–21.

<sup>94</sup> See Morony, *Iraq*, p. 151 and the map on p. 127.

<sup>95</sup> So understood by Stein also: *Studien*, 92. He speaks of "des Lachmiden" in the singular, presumably thinking of the Lakhmid king—the counterpart of Munḍir, the Ghassānid, on the Roman side. But it is not clear who the Lakhmid king was—whether he was Munḍir IV or the more famous successor, Nu'mān; on the date of the latter's accession, see below, 518–19.

mids who shadowed the expeditionary force down the Euphrates and who advised the Persians that the bridge should be destroyed. The Lakhmids must have been even more active during the retreat, since they could harass further the Byzantine army, which was already discouraged by the destruction of the bridge and fatigued by a forced march through difficult terrain.<sup>96</sup> This is clearly referred to by Evagrius in his short chapter on the expedition. Evagrius goes out of his way to make special mention of the fleetness of the Lakhmid cavalry.<sup>97</sup>

It is more than likely that they also participated in the military operations of the Persian general Adarmahan in Osroene and in Mesopotamia, especially as the Ghassānids were involved in these operations. Lakhmid participation in this region in the faraway north is attested during the campaign of the Lakhmid king Nu'mān against Edessa in 502, and earlier in 485 the Lakhmids were rushed from the south to participate in military operations in Mesopotamia.<sup>98</sup>

The campaign of 580/81 against Ctesiphon invites comparison with that of Julian in 363, especially as the Arabs play a similar role in both campaigns. Julian's campaign brings to mind familiar toponyms in the campaign of 580/81; he meets the Arab *foederati* near Callinicum, marches with them to Circesium, and thence to Anat. Arabs on both sides play a prominent role in the campaigns of both Julian and Maurice, and Podosacis of 363 balances Mundir of 580/81. Finally, the Arabs come in for blame in both campaigns; just as Mundir was accused of treachery to the cause of the Byzantines, suspicions were cast in certain circles on the Arabs as responsible for the death of Julian, and even before his death relations had soured after he denied them their *munera* and *salaria*.<sup>99</sup>

#### VII. MUNDIR'S LAST VICTORY OVER THE LAKHMIDS, 581

After the conclusion of the last phase of the campaign of 580/81 in Mesopotamia, Mundir returned from the north only to find that the Lakhmids, reinforced by Persian troops, were ready to fall on him. But he did not wait

<sup>96</sup> Separated from the Byzantine army by the Euphrates, the Lakhmids must have used the deadliest of all weapons for harassment during the retreat, namely, the bow and arrow in the best Persian tradition, and this must have been especially grievous to a swordsman, such as the Ghassānid Mundir was.

<sup>97</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, Book V, chap. 20.

<sup>98</sup> See *BAFIC*, 115–19, and above, 13. The Arabic *Chronicle* of Ḥamza states that Nu'mān, the Lakhmid king of this period, attacked Qirqisiyā' (Circesium). This could only have been in the context of the Persian-Byzantine conflict during the reign of Maurice and the last two years of the reign of Tiberius. Whether he attacked Circesium during this campaign or that of some other year is not clear, but it is evidence for Lakhmid participation in operations in Mesopotamia, far from their capital, Ḥīra. See Ḥamza al-İşfahānī, *Tārīkh*, 95.

<sup>99</sup> For the role of the Arabs in Julian's Persian campaign, see *BAFOC*, 107–37.

for them and took the initiative, having been informed by his intelligence service of their whereabouts and numbers. Not only did he defeat them and take prisoners, but he also marched against their *ḥīra* (camp), pillaged it, and burned it. In the Latin version of John of Ephesus, the account of this campaign reads as follows:

Historia XVIII, de Mondir filio Ḥarīth, et de victoria qua potitus est. Contra Mondir vero filium Ḥarīth totus exercitus Ṭayāye Persarum collectus est quibuscum exercitus quoque ipsius Persae adfuit, ut ascenderent et Mondir inciderent, postquam a terra Persarum ascendit. Qui certior factus utpote bellicosus non tardavit, sed statim exercitu suo collecto eos in via quae per desertum fert observavit, cum missis speculatoribus ubi et quot essent didicisset; et cum subito eis imprudentibus incidisset, stupefactos conturbavit et trucidavit et perdidit, et partem eorum in vincula ac catenas iniecit, ita ut pauci tantum eorum evaserint. Unde, cursu ad castra eorum directo, ea vastavit et incendit; et invasione facta cum praeda multa et captivis multis reversus est, et gloriam magnam adeptus est.<sup>100</sup>

As this was an extraordinary performance and was to be the last time that Muṇḍir took the field, it deserves to be analyzed in detail.

#### A

The exact date of the battle cannot be determined, but it evidently took place after the conclusion of the campaign in Mesopotamia in which Muṇḍir fought with Maurice. John of Ephesus clearly reflects this as he gives his account of it in a separate chapter immediately following his account of the operations in Mesopotamia. The scene of the encounter is not clear either, but the historian speaks of Muṇḍir's rushing to meet the Lakhmids somewhere in the desert, "in via quae per desertum fert." This recalls the reference to the desert in Theophylact and in John of Ephesus himself, when they were describing the march of the Byzantine army, along the right bank of the Euphrates.<sup>101</sup> So the presumption is that it was somewhere in that area, the route that Muṇḍir took to return to Ghassānid territory. This is corroborated by his capture of their camp after the victory, which suggests one of the towns associated with the Lakhmids on the middle Euphrates such as Hīt or Anbār.

The Lakhmids had been defeated regularly by Muṇḍir in the course of the decade, and it is not surprising that they chose to attack him at this juncture. They probably assumed that, because of the failure of the campaign of 580/81 and their own successes, Muṇḍir would be vulnerable. That the

<sup>100</sup> *HE*, p. 238, lines 20–33.

<sup>101</sup> See above, 416–17.

Lakhmids and their overlords, the Persians, considered this an important operation is reflected in the fact that not only Arab Lakhmid troops were involved and, what is more, their entire army, but that they were helped by a Persian contingent, a sign of the prestige of Munḍir as a commander.

Even after the fatigues, tribulations, and discouragement of the abortive campaign that he fought with Maurice, Munḍir had not lost his verve, and he immediately evinced all the qualities that distinguished the new style he introduced into warfare on the eastern front. As always he took the initiative and did not wait for them to attack him; in so doing, he fought on terrain of his own choosing, in addition to the moral effect of the initiative in suggesting to the Lakhmids and their Persian allies that he was still the same thunderbolt they had known.

As already noted, the Ghassānids employed an efficient intelligence service. Through his spies, Munḍir learned the number of his enemies and exactly where they were encamped. With this information at his disposal, he rushed to meet them, aided by the knowledge of the topography of the area that he had acquired in many years of service as warden of the desert frontier, while still a crown prince. His offensive is characterized by speed, suddenness, and secrecy, the qualities that had distinguished his previous campaigns and indeed were the secrets of his success. It was a complete victory that involved the massacre of many of the enemy and the capturing of others. Finally, he crowned this success with a march against their *ḥīra/Ḥīra* (camp), which he pillaged and burned. This last act reveals another dimension of his new style. He does not believe in "conquests of geography"; he prefers to destroy the enemy's army.

## B

The question has been raised and debated whether the last phase of the campaign ended with the capture and burning of a Lakhmid "camp," *ḥīra*, or the capital, *Ḥīra*, both of which the Syriac word employed does designate. As mentioned earlier, Nöldeke thought that the burning of *Ḥīra* took place immediately after the campaign against Ctesiphon and not after the reconciliation of Munḍir with Byzantium in the mid-570s, and it has been argued cogently by Rothstein that this was not the case.<sup>102</sup> A few further observations are now called for in this discussion of Munḍir's last campaign.

Although Rothstein was right in emphasizing that *Ḥīra* was not captured or burned in 580/81, he was mistaken in thinking that John of Ephesus' account of this last campaign against the Lakhmids was a jumbled one and a duplicate of the first in 575 and that, consequently, it did not take place.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See above, 389–90.

<sup>103</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 104 note 4.

The historicity of the campaign is beyond doubt, and its details are such that it is impossible to conceive of it as a duplicate, especially in view of the opening sentences of the account. There is no doubt that after his victory over the Perso-Lakhmid host, Muṣṣab did capture and burn a Lakhmid establishment. It is not inconceivable that it was Ḥīra again, but unlikely in view of two major objections.

1. The Syriac expression *ḥirih-bōn*, "their ḥīra,"<sup>104</sup> is not the natural description of Ḥīra, the well-known city of the Lakhmids. The Syriac writer would not have referred to Ḥīra as "their Ḥīra," an unnatural expression for the city, especially as he had recorded in a previous passage how Muṣṣab referred to it correctly as "the Ḥīra of Nu'mān"<sup>105</sup> in an identical context, when he was exhorting his soldiers to attack it in 575.

2. Furthermore, if it had been Ḥīra, he would have described the operation with some detail and would not have contented himself with referring to it unceremoniously as "their ḥīra." He would have made much of the operation, especially since this would have been the *second* time that Muṣṣab captured and burned it, an even more remarkable achievement.

What meaning should then be given to "*ḥīra*," captured and burned by Muṣṣab? This must have been one of the Lakhmid towns in the Sawād, the territorial jurisdiction of the Lakhmids along the right bank of the Euphrates, which consisted of a number of towns such as Hīt or Anbār or even 'Ayn al-Tamr<sup>106</sup> or some such advanced post where the Lakhmids encamped and whence they issued out to attack Muṣṣab.

The Lakhmid king who sustained the humiliation of 575 must have been al-Muṣṣab IV, son of the more celebrated father, the Alamoundaros of the Greek sources. Who the Lakhmid king was who sustained the defeat of 580/81 is not certain. If the duration of the reign of Nu'mān, the last Lakhmid king, is correctly calculated by Hishām,<sup>107</sup> Nu'mān could not have been the Lakhmid king in 580/81, and so he must have been the same Muṣṣab who had been defeated in 575.

## C

The preceding sections have thus recovered an important military operation conducted by Muṣṣab, indeed the last one in his military career, which had been either ignored or misunderstood by two specialists.<sup>108</sup> It remains to make some final observations on it in relation to Muṣṣab's generalship and,

<sup>104</sup> See *HE*, textus, p. 314, line 16.

<sup>105</sup> See *HE*, p. 217, lines 17–18. Brooks correctly translated it as *castra*.

<sup>106</sup> For these toponyms that lay within the Lakhmid territorial jurisdiction in the so-called Sawād, west of the Euphrates, see the maps in Morony, *Iraq*, 127, 336, and 151 on Ḥīra.

<sup>107</sup> On this see also below, 519 and note 5.

<sup>108</sup> Rothstein, *DLH*, 104 note 4. It escaped the notice of Stein, *Studien*, 93.



more important, in relation to his image in Greek historiography and to the estrangement with his chief, Maurice, already embittered during the campaign.

1. The victory was a splendid example of the triumph of the new style introduced by Mundir in the Persian-Byzantine conflict in the steppes of the Syro-Mesopotamian region, based on speed and aggressiveness, supported by a superb intelligence service. He had fashioned an instrument of victory for operating in climate and terrain well known to him and against enemies he was perfectly familiar with. All this was frustrated when he was paired with a commander-in-chief, Maurice, who had entirely different strategic concepts, mostly static and old-fashioned. The course of the campaign examined in this chapter has revealed operations and tactics that were quite alien to Mundir's style—the naval battle at 'Ānat on the Euphrates and long marches that were slow and conducted under the eyes and ears of the enemy. He could win when he operated alone, and in conformity with his own strategic conceptions, and this was the chance provided by the Lakhmid offensive against him after his return from Mesopotamia. Now he could plan and execute on his own without having to coordinate his actions with a *magister militum* who had a different strategy that violated his own, which consisted of speed and secrecy. The fatigues of the previous campaign, and the discouragements of reverses and checks sustained, apparently had no effect on him since he immediately rushed to the encounter. Perhaps he was anxious for such an opportunity after being cooped up with Maurice, and so he fought this, his last campaign, alone without the encumbrance of that awkward yoke.

2. This last campaign against the Lakhmids is relevant to the discussion of the *prodosia* charge that the Greek historians—all admirers, friends, and protégés of Maurice—leveled against Mundir. Although this will be discussed at length in the following chapter, it is enough to record this campaign as evidence of the falsity of the charge. What Theophylact described as a "flitting drone"<sup>109</sup> did not behave as such; immediately after his return from Mesopotamia his enemies attacked him, and if he had been in collusion with the Persians and the Lakhmids, as had been intimated by his detractors, these would not have done so. Also his response was not that of a traitor to the cause of the Byzantines but that of one who was loyal to the empire and was fighting its wars against its age-long enemies.<sup>110</sup>

3. Finally, his victory could not have endeared him to the heart of

<sup>109</sup> Turtledove, *Successors of Justinian*, 311.

<sup>110</sup> Even Procopius would have exonerated him of *prodosia* on this score. When Arethas, his father, after the conclusion of the second Persian war of Justinian's reign, engaged in a war with the Lakhmid Mundir, Procopius judged that he was not a traitor to the Romans because of this war; see *History*, II.xviii.13.

Maurice. There is no doubt that Mundir would have sent a bulletin to Maurice or to the emperor on his latest victory. The contrast between his victory over the Perso-Lakhmid host and the failure of Maurice to capture Ctesiphon must have been strident. Thus Maurice, already ill-disposed toward Mundir and with much animus generated during the campaign, could not have been thrilled by the news that his subordinate—and, what is more, alone—had scored a smashing victory over the enemy. So even his last victory operated against him with his *magister militum* and with all those in Constantinople who had been conspiring to bring about his downfall.

#### VIII. MUNDIR'S GENERALSHIP: AN EVALUATION

Since the death of Odenathus, no Arab soldier came within measurable distance of the distinguished Palmyrene<sup>111</sup> until the appearance of Mundir. E. Stein was the first to appreciate the outstanding military qualities of the Ghassānid commander and his place in the military annals of Rome: "Seine Erscheinung ist beispielloos in der langen römischen Geschichte. Wiewohl militärisch nur Spezialist in einer ganz bestimmten Art des Kampfes, leiste er nichtsdestoweniger in dieser ausgezeichnete Dienste, so daß er billig als einer der ersten Feldherrn des Reiches gelten konnte und wahrscheinlich, worauf die äußere Anerkennung, die ihm zuteil wurde, auch galt."<sup>112</sup>

Stein did not expatiate or elaborate since he was not writing a specialized history of the Ghassānids, but he did penetrate the prejudiced accounts of the Greek historians and came to an appreciation of Mundir's generalship which he rested on John of Ephesus whose reliability Nöldeke had advertised.<sup>113</sup> In a volume such as this, exclusively devoted to Arab-Byzantine relations, one must give a detailed evaluation of Mundir's generalship, especially as it is relevant to the dramatic sequence of events that led to the disastrous Byzantine defeats in the seventh century. This profile of the Byzantine federate commander will treat the following topics: (1) the various phases of his military career; (2) the dimensions of his generalship; (3) the army at his disposal; (4) the new military style; and (5) Mundir and Ctesiphon.

#### 1

In 563 Mundir was deemed worthy of being appointed Arethas' successor, and this implies that for some years before that he had been tried and not found wanting. No doubt he was old enough to take part in the decisive Ghassānid victory of Chalchis in 554 and probably even in engagements before

<sup>111</sup> Even in his titles, which consisted of "imperator, corrector totius Orientis, dux Romanorum," and "rex regum"; see *CAH*, XII, 175; also the present writer in "Titulature," 291-92, and above, 411-12.

<sup>112</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 95-96.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

that date that witnessed the Ghassānid-Lakhmid conflict. But 554 was a significant date, and so serves as terminus for the first phase of his military career, when for some nine years he was one of his father's generals, technically a phylarch.<sup>114</sup> He must have received his military training from his father personally—horsemanship, wielding the sword and the spear. Warfare was a family tradition with the Ghassānids, who were a military aristocracy. Each of them cultivated the skills and abilities inherited from his predecessor and outdid him, as Arethas outshone Jabala, his father, and Munḍir outshone Arethas. These nine years were years of peace after the victory of 554, but no doubt the warlike phylarch was not lying idle but was possibly taking part in campaigns in the Arabian Peninsula.

In 563 he was appointed Arethas' successor,<sup>115</sup> and so this period extends from 563 to 569 when his father died. The relevant facts that bear on his generalship in this period are two. His formidable father was still alive and in control. This meant that Munḍir was checked and whatever military conception he had of his own, he could not put into operation since his father was determined to observe the Peace of 561 and not to engage in military adventures. Arethas had stabilized the front, and he wanted it to stay that way. The second fact is that he was now warden of the frontier. While his old father probably resided in the Provincia Arabia, or in the Gōlān at Jābiya, Munḍir was stationed along the *limes* in Phoenicia Libanensis or Syria Salutaris, possibly not far from the *Strata*, in order to watch the frontier and protect it against possible incursions, mainly from the Lakhmids. Although his father was still alive, yet he held the responsible position of successor now, and as successor he must have spent these six years in preparation for his role when he would become the supreme phylarch responsible only to himself and the *magister militum* in Antioch. As crown prince he must have spent these six years maturing his own plans and perfecting them, in preparation for his role when he would become master in his own house. The decade of his sole kingship presented a new style in Byzantine warfare, and this could provide a clue as to what the crown prince had been doing in the course of these six years.

He probably made a thorough study of the topography and geography of the area that separated him and the Roman *limes* from Ḥīra and the Persian frontier, especially the former. As a Ghassānid, his principal foe was his Lakhmid counterpart,<sup>116</sup> rather than the Persian, and so he must have perfected his

<sup>114</sup> Most probably with the rank of *clarissimus*.

<sup>115</sup> No doubt as crown prince he was promoted from *clarissimus* to *spectabilis* or even *illustris* or *gloriosissimus*.

<sup>116</sup> It should be mentioned in this connection that Munḍir was fortunate in having as his Lakhmid counterpart not his formidable namesake, the Lakhmid Munḍir III, but the weaker sons, Ḳābūs and Munḍir IV.

knowledge of how to reach Ḥīra, which he was to effect in the 570s. The aggressiveness of ʿAmr the Lakhmid immediately after the Peace of 561, reflected in the extant fragments of Menander, must have convinced him that the Lakhmids were unreliable and treacherous enemies and that they could attack at any time in spite of the peace that prevailed between the two great powers.

He must also have acquainted himself thoroughly with the human geography of the area—the various tribes that inhabited or grazed their flocks in the region that lay between him and the Lakhmids. This was an important element in conducting his future campaigns against Ḥīra, for safely marching through their territories, for getting some help from them, and possibly using them as spies against the Lakhmids.

Mundir, like all Romanized and Hellenized Arabs, knew the two languages of the empire—Greek and Latin—especially Greek, and also some Syriac, the language of the Monophysite church in Syria. Although he had enough on his hands in these six years as warden of the frontier, along the lines explored in the two preceding paragraphs, it is not impossible that the born soldier may have consulted military manuals on the art of war or even history books on his distinguished Arab predecessor in the region, Odenathus of Palmyra.<sup>117</sup> Whether or not this can be proved, there is no doubt that he must have assimilated much of the Roman and Byzantine manner of fighting by assimilating what his father had learned<sup>118</sup> and by joining him as a phylarch in the Ghassānid contingent of the army of the Orient when it moved against the Persians and thus he could see regular Byzantine στρατιῶται in action.

The third and last phase of his military career was the decade or so of his kingship from 569 until his fall ca. 580/81. This was in sharp contrast with the preceding two phases that were strictly governed by defensive concepts of war. This last phase was characterized by a new style of warfare, offensive and aggressive, the objective of which was the “glorious” and “decisive” victory, even the principle of the overkill. This was a complete departure from the style of his father and also from the standard classical Byzantine style that prevailed in this period. Mundir’s style was probably in harmony with the conclusion he had reached while he was the warden of the frontier in 563–569—that the Lakhmids, in spite of the technical peace that prevailed be-

<sup>117</sup> On the availability of military manuals in 6th-century Byzantium, see John Lydus, *On Powers*, ed. and trans. A. C. Bandy (Philadelphia, 1983), 74. On the possibility of his having read works on Odenathus of Palmyra, see below, 437–38; on the possibility that he was the son of the distinguished personage from the Provincia Arabia who studied with Choricus in Gaza, see above, 189 with note 47.

<sup>118</sup> On Jabala’s fighting in the Roman manner, see above, 65.

tween the two powers, were intent on renewing the war, that they wanted to avenge the humiliation of the battle of Chalcis, in which their great warrior-king, the Alamoundaros of Procopius, had fallen. For his part, Mundir too must have remembered that his brother Jabala had died at the battle of Chalcis at Lakhmid hands, as had his grandfather and namesake, Jabala, who had died at the battle of Thannūris, fought against the Persians in 528. So he probably thought the best way to settle this question definitively was by going on the offensive instead of fighting a defensive war. Consequently, after biding his time for the fifteen years of the two preceding phases, during which he was reined in by the powerful presence of his father, he celebrated his accession with a smashing victory followed by four more victories of the same quality. This changed the character of the Ghassānid contingent in the army of the Orient from a frontier force to keep the peace into an army of conquest; only in this way could the "Lakhmid Question" be solved.

## 2

Little or nothing is known about his generalship in the first two phases of his military career since his father dominated Arab-Byzantine relations during that time. It is in the third phase, and owing to the precious information supplied by John of Ephesus, that it is possible to analyze the various dimensions of his generalship,<sup>119</sup> displayed in the course of the decade, during which he scored five crushing victories over the Lakhmids and participated in the war against the Persians:

1. Secrecy of planning: in a region where the employment of spies by both parties was common, it was important to plan secretly. This Mundir always did to the point of withholding information from his own army and his commanders concerning the destination of the expedition until it was safe to do so.

2. The employment of spies: this is related to the excellent intelligence service at his disposal which he always employed before he attacked. On his return from the battle of Callinicum, and before attacking the Lakhmids, he ascertained through spies how many there were and where they were.

3. Speed and the element of surprise: this most important element in conducting a successful campaign was mastered by Mundir, as is clear from

<sup>119</sup> John of Ephesus is supported by what the *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234 says, but these Syriac sources are not the only ones that speak of the prowess of the Ghassānids and their generalship. Contemporary Arabic poetry on the immediate successors of Mundir tells the same story; see *BASIC II*. The various points discussed in this section on the dimensions of his generalship are based on the preceding sections that have discussed the exploits of Mundir against the Lakhmids.

the account of John of Ephesus. Perhaps the celebrated speed of the Arab cavalry was also a relevant factor.

4. The cavalry: this was the main arm of the Ghassānid contingent and was composed of powerful and fleet Arab horses. The cavalry, and not the infantry, was what ensured Ghassānid victories.

5. Wariness and caution: in spite of his impetuosity as an aggressive commander, Munḍir was wily and exercised caution. He refused to cross the Euphrates when Mauice asked him to do so, fully aware that he would only be encircled and annihilated by his Lakhmid enemies.<sup>120</sup>

So his was a strategy of secrecy, speed, and surprise; his army was always in a state of combat readiness, and the victory was decisive and annihilating. No surprise, then, that John of Ephesus had great admiration for him and thought of him and his generalship in heroic terms.<sup>121</sup>

In addition to these technical dimensions of his generalship, there were personal ones that also insured the successful outcome of engagements with the Lakhmids. Munḍir was not a commander who directed his battles from a distance, but, like Alexander, was the first to lead his men, as "the bravest of the brave." This was the Ghassānid style in conducting their wars, adopted by his father, Arethas, and his grandfather, Jabala. Related to this is the fact that he was more a swordsman than a spearman. In the estimation of the Arabs, the former was braver than the latter. His enthusiasm and impetuosity were noted by John of Ephesus, even when he was not engaged in combat but was trying to reconcile the various Monophysite factions. This is easily related to his being an aggressive commander who believed in the offensive as the way to win victory and not to wait for his enemies to overtake him.

There is also the Christianity of Munḍir as an element in his generalship. It gave the moral and spiritual basis to his military qualities, and he did command an army of believers. This is important to remember; it distinguished him and the Ghassānids from his Lakhmid counterpart in the makeup of whose army this element was missing since they were pagans. His Christianity is reflected clearly in his relation to the Monophysite movement, but specifically in a military context on two occasions: in the final sentence of his letter to the *magister militum* Justinianus, who reconciled him to Byzantium after his defection; and in the way he spared the churches of Ḥīra and disposed of the booty on his return.<sup>122</sup> He was a *miles Christianus*, a Christian soldier in

<sup>120</sup> This recalls the "wisdom" attributed to his grandfather, Jabala, as a commander, by Zacharia; see above, 65.

<sup>121</sup> Lucan's verse in the *Pharsalia*, extolling Caesar's thoroughness and perfectionism, may be applicable to Munḍir: "nil actum credens cum quid supereset agendum!"

<sup>122</sup> On all this, see above, 380.



the service of the Christian Roman Empire. There is even a touch of chivalry, that of the medieval knight, about him, and, what is more, the union of Arabic *murūʿa* and *dīn* in the person of the Arab federate king.<sup>123</sup>

## 3

Mundir inherited from his father a victorious army that had won in 554 the last round in the Lakhmid-Ghassānid war. But it became an even better army under Mundir since it was *invariably* victorious against the Lakhmids. The Greek and Syriac sources, unlike the Arabic, are almost silent on this army.

The condition of the Byzantine army, especially after the wars of Justinian, deteriorated, plagued by problems of diminishing manpower, payment, recruitment, mutinies, and discipline.<sup>124</sup> In contrast, there arose a relatively small, new army—the Ghassānid contingent, a federate, mobile army that possessed qualities some of which the Byzantine army had lost. It offered the fairest chance of conducting a winning war against the Lakhmids and even against the Persians, if it had been allowed to develop, unmolested by imperial intervention.

The Ghassānid host was an army and not a band of raiders. This is reflected in the language of the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic sources that had occasion to refer to it: *stratos*, *ḥaylā*, and *jaysb*. No doubt it was a combination of Byzantine and Arab elements that went into its making. But the organization no doubt came from Byzantium and from participation in the campaigns of the army of the Orient against Persia. When the Ghassānids participated, it was as a contingent of cavalry which was stationed at one of the wings, as when Arethas joined Belisarius at Callinicum in 531 with a cavalry force of five thousand and was stationed by the *magister* on the right wing of the Byzantine army. But when it marched alone, as in the campaign against the Lakhmids, it probably was a *khamīs*, an army of five components: center, two wings, vanguard, and rearguard. The smaller units of which the army was composed are not known but are mentioned once in Arabic poetry, which employs the term *katāʿib* (singular, *katība*), "division," "squadron." Although this poetry was composed a decade or two after Mundir's reign, it is practically certain that the *katāʿib* mentioned in it were known to the Ghassānid army of Mundir's time.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>123</sup> I. Goldziher in a well-known article contrasted the new religion which Muḥammad preached, *dīn*, with the old virtues of Arab chivalry, *murūʿa* (*murūʿa*); the subject has been reexamined by B. Fares in *El*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *murūʿa*. The views of both scholars have been debated by Ch. Pellat, *ibid.*, under "Bibliography."

<sup>124</sup> For the Roman army, see Jones, *LRE*, I, 607–86, esp. p. 678 on its deteriorating condition.

<sup>125</sup> The term clearly implies that the Ghassānids did not fight in the primitive Arab way in *ṣufūf*, "lines." For the term *katība/katāʿib* as a possible translation of a Greek military term, see *BASIC* II.

No doubt it was mainly, or wholly, cavalry, since this was its place in the composition of the Byzantine army of the Orient. The Arabian horse was mettlesome and well known for its speed and powers of endurance. An army composed of such horses must have been irresistible in its charge. As in the battles of Alexander, it was the cavalry breakthrough that insured victory. In addition to the cavalry charge, there were of course the individual combats, sometimes fought while the Ghassānid warrior was still on horseback. The best testimony to the importance of the horses and the care with which the Ghassānids treated them is that they gave them names, and sometimes the Ghassānid chief would be referred to as the *fāris*, the rider of a horse that had a name.<sup>126</sup>

Ghassānid weapons must have been principally the sword and the spear; both are mentioned in Arabic poetry on the Ghassānids, but prominence is given to the sword. They probably used their spears or lances at the initial impact of the cavalry charge, but then dismounted and fought with their swords. The precedence given to the sword over the spear is also reflected in the fact that, like the horse, the Ghassānid swords had names; the Ghassānids had their "Excaliburs" and "Durundals." The Ghassānid warrior also wore a coat of mail, sometimes a double one.<sup>127</sup> Reference to bows and arrows is missing in the prose accounts and in the poetry.<sup>128</sup> This was apparently more the weapon of the Lakhmids who, as vassals of the Persians, must have taken after their overlords whose archery was celebrated. And indeed there is reference in Evagrius<sup>129</sup> to the Persian-Lakhmid missiles at the retreat of the Arab-Byzantine army from Ctesiphon in 581.

Such then was Muḍīr's army, which won the five campaigns of the Ghassānid-Lakhmid war in the decade of his reign, and such was its commander-in-chief. Even so, the victories are startling, and the question arises whether the Ghassānid army also had some new weapon or device that gave it an edge over the Lakhmids. Did it have the stirrup? This could have given the Ghassānid warrior more stability when thrusting with the lance or cutting a swath through the enemy infantry. It is possible, but there is no way of asserting this categorically.<sup>130</sup>

## 4

Did this new style of warfare, this new strategy of Muḍīr, derive from Byzantine or Arab ideas of strategy? It was certainly not sixth-century Byzan-

<sup>126</sup> On this, see *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> On references in Arabic contemporary poetry to the names of their swords and to their coats of mail, see *ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> The Ghassānids, however, must have used bows and arrows, at least for hunting.

<sup>129</sup> See above, 415.

<sup>130</sup> On the stirrup, see below, 572-78.

tine strategy, the principles of which are to be found in the *Stratēgikon*,<sup>131</sup> which recommended methods of warfare that ran counter to all that Muḍīr's campaigns exemplified. This military manual advised the avoidance of bloody battles and the slaughter of the enemy, the avoidance of pitched battles that were risky. There is emphasis on caution, and the author recommends allowing the encircled enemy to flee because fighting an enemy that has been encircled costs the encircler dearly.<sup>132</sup> A keen student of Byzantine warfare recently expressed the tone of sixth-century strategies during the reign of Justinian: "It was warfare of patience, timing, cleverness, and endless maneuvering. Glory and zeal in battle were not regarded as essential qualities for success in war." On "enthusiasm," a quality that Muḍīr possessed to an eminent degree, he quotes Procopius: "enthusiasm is advantageous and very praiseworthy in so far as it is moderate and brings no harm to its possessors."<sup>133</sup> So, in short, defensive warfare was recommended and emphasized; it was static warfare, inspired by a "limes mentality." By elimination, then, the chances are that Muḍīr's strategic conceptions were Arab, deriving from the principles of Arab desert warfare. It is possible to detect three influences.

1. The Ghassānid influence. The Ghassānid phylarch belonged to a group of professional soldiers that had fought in the Arabian Peninsula, indeed, had hewn their way in their march from South Arabia to the Roman frontier. So they were familiar with the principle of desert warfare which emphasized speed, secrecy, and surprise. After they made the Roman connection, they continued to fight their congeners in the Arabian Peninsula on behalf of Rome, and so did not lose touch with the principle of Arab desert strategy. When they fought as a contingent in the army of the Orient against the Persians, the Ghassānids supplied elements that were missing in the Byzantine armies—mobility and spirit.

2. The Lakhmid component. It is also possible that there was a Lakhmid component in this strategy. In a spirited passage, remarkably long on the formidable Muḍīr the Lakhmid, Procopius refers to his strategy, which seems to sum up the three principles of Arab desert warfare, but enhanced by the personality of Muḍīr and the fact that he was supported by a world power, Persia:

For he never made his inroad without looking about, but so suddenly did he move and so very opportunely for himself, that, as a rule, he was already off with all the plunder when the generals and the soldiers were

<sup>131</sup> On the *Stratēgikon*, see below, 568–83.

<sup>132</sup> See *Das Stratēgikon des Maurikios*, ed. G. T. Dennis, German trans. E. Gamillscheg (Vienna, 1981), 8.2.92.

<sup>133</sup> See W. E. Kaegi, Jr., *Some Thoughts on Byzantine Military Strategy* (Brookline, Mass., 1983), 6.

beginning to learn what had happened and to gather themselves against him. If, indeed, by any chance, they were able to catch him, this barbarian would fall upon his pursuers while still unprepared and not in battle array, and would rout and destroy them with no trouble; and on one occasion he made prisoners of all the soldiers who were pursuing him together with their officers.<sup>134</sup>

Now this was the warrior whom Mundir's grandfather, Jabala, and his father, Arethas, had fought. And it was his strategy that brought about the appointment of the Ghassānid Arethas as supreme phylarch and king. But Arethas continued the defensive war of Byzantium and waged his war against Mundir within the context of Byzantine defensive strategy, which was certainly crowned with success on the battlefield of Chalcis in 554, when he won a crushing victory over Mundir and killed him. It was Arethas' son, Mundir, who, working on this combination of Lakhmid-Ghassānid strategy, converted it from a defensive into an offensive one, and thus created the new style, although this was exactly what Byzantium neither wanted nor needed, since it ran counter to established Byzantine military thinking.

3. Odenathus of Palmyra. Finally, it is not altogether impossible that there was a third Arab influence on Mundir, that of Arab Palmyra, represented by its outstanding general and prince Odenathus, who may possibly have been a role model for Mundir.

To sum up, then, Mundir's new strategy was based on the principles of Arab desert warfare—the three "S's"—secrecy, speed, and surprise. But it was raised to a higher power by association with Byzantium from which the Ghassānid army benefited in its organization (no longer an Arabian band of warriors but an army) and in its adoption of weaponry, perhaps even including the stirrup.

## 5

The crowning achievement of Mundir's new strategy was no doubt his victory over the Lakhmids, which resulted in his conquest and capture of their capital, Hīra. The most ambitious of all the campaigns he undertook was that against Ctesiphon, which ended in failure. These two military targets raise questions that must be addressed.

## A

Why did Mundir find it necessary or desirable to carry the war of revenge to the enemy's capital? He must have come to the conclusion that in spite of peace treaties, such as that of 561, the Lakhmids were intent on

<sup>134</sup> Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.42–43.

breaking the peace and resuming their raids and incursions, among other things to take revenge for the resounding defeat of the Lakhmid armies on the battlefield of Chalcis in 554. After reflecting on the best solution of this Lakhmid problem, he apparently concluded that only a campaign that attempted the destruction of their capital would teach the Lakhmids a true lesson. And he was disposed to do that since his own temperament as a general was that of the aggressive commander who believed in the offensive. In true Arab fashion, he remembered the fateful battle of 554; if the Lakhmids lost their leader, the formidable Muḍir III, he too lost his brother Jabala<sup>135</sup> on the same battlefield. The war of revenge was alive in the consciousness of the Ghassānid victors as well as in that of the Lakhmid losers.

This is pure speculation, although supported by some relevant facts. What is not so speculative is the relevance of the fall of South Arabia to the Persians in 570. This was a severe blow to Byzantium and the Ghassānids at the beginning of Muḍir's reign, which must have sounded like a thunder-clap. It was bad enough for the Ghassānids, the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium and her shield against the Arabs of the Peninsula, that a slice of that Peninsula should have fallen to the secular enemy, Persia, so easily and so suddenly without their being able to do anything about it. More specifically, the Ghassānids must have keenly felt the impact of that fall. In South Arabia was Najrān, the city of the Arabian martyrs, the Holy City of the Christian Arabs, and, what is more, a city dear to the hearts of the Ghassānids on the grounds of tribal affinity. The Balḥārith tribe, to which the martyrs of Najrān belonged, were cousins of the Ghassānids. The latter had hailed from the Arabian south, and some of them returned there in the 580s after the quarrel with Maurice.<sup>136</sup> It was difficult for Muḍir to believe that such a large operation on the Arabian front would have been executed without the cooperation or collusion of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra, who were set up by the Persians to perform the same type of function that the Ghassānids performed for Byzantium, namely, to be their allies against Arabia and act as their advisors on Arab and Arabian affairs.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>135</sup> The death of Jabala in 554 may have been disastrous to Ghassānid-Byzantine relations; his name suggests he was Arethas' eldest son and presumably would have been his successor. He may have been a less impetuous commander than his younger brother Muḍir, who succeeded his father after the death of his elder brother. Jabala might have fared better with Maurice and followed more his father's defensive style in dealing with the Lakhmids.

<sup>136</sup> On the very close relations and ties that obtained between the Ghassānids and Najrān, see below, 546-47.

<sup>137</sup> On the letter addressed by Yūsuf, the king of Ḥimyar, to the Lakhmid Muḍir around 520, for concerting action against the Christians in both realms, South Arabia and Lakhmid territory, see the present writer in "Conference of Ramla," 122-28. For the involvement of the Lakhmids in the Persian conquest of South Arabia, see above, 371-72.

The extraordinary and audacious military operation that resulted in the capture of Ḥīra must raise the question of Muḍīr's route to that city. John of Ephesus, who records the campaign, says little or nothing about the route. One must rely on the facts of geography, both physical and historical, about Ḥīra, the approaches to it, and the lines of defense that protected it. When Rothstein wrote his monograph on the Lakhmids, he did so without the help of maps or a discussion of the approaches to and defenses of Ḥīra. That situation has changed. Much progress has been made by Iranists and those who deal with the Arabs of Persia in Sasanid times, which throws light on the problem, although it does not solve the mystery of Muḍīr's march to Ḥīra. There was *khandaq Sābūr*, the ditch of Shāpūr, which "stretched along the edge of the desert from the Euphrates near Hīt, through the region of oases called Ṭaff to the sea near the later site of Baṣra. This line was fortified with watch towers and barracks for garrisons to prevent Beduin attacks on the cultivated land of Iraq and it was regarded as the effective boundary between Iraq and the Najd."<sup>138</sup> Such was the *khandaq* that protected Ḥīra, built by Shāpūr II (A.D. 309–379) and restored by Chosroes Anūshravān in the sixth century. How Muḍīr eluded this, or penetrated to Ḥīra in spite of it, and from what direction is not at all clear. But these advances in our knowledge of the topography of the area and of the Persian system of fortifications only go to underline the difficulties that Muḍīr had to overcome in order to reach Ḥīra, and consequently they enhance the worth of his strategy for capturing what seemed to be an impregnable city.

## B

Ḥīra is not far from Ctesiphon, a mere 150 kilometers, and the question arises as to whether the conqueror of Ḥīra, the capital of the vassal, developed a desire to capture Ctesiphon, the capital of the overlord. This was, of course, entirely above and beyond the terms of Muḍīr's assignment as an Arab phylarch and a federate king whose field of operation was principally the limitrophe and its protection, but it was not beyond the ambition or at least military thinking of the restless and aggressive Muḍīr. If he did not himself dream of capturing Ctesiphon, he at least could have done some thinking about it, developing ideas on how it could be accomplished by one who would be empowered to do so. This is indeed what was to happen a few years after the capture of Ḥīra in 575, when he joined Maurice in an expedition that targeted the conquest of Ctesiphon in 580/81. Muḍīr's possible plans on how to capture the Sasanid capital are important to discuss with some detail. The campaign against Ctesiphon in 580/81 was a major military undertaking on

<sup>138</sup> See the very useful chapter on the subject in Morony, *Iraq*, 151–55, and the valuable section on Arḍ Bābil, pp. 143–51; see also the maps on pp. 127 and 336.



the part of Byzantium, indeed, the most ambitious one in the context of the Persian wars since the campaign of Julian in 363. Yet, while the latter has received so much scrutiny,<sup>139</sup> this one has been sadly neglected. The Greek historians who recorded it have survived only in fragments, and their epitomators have little to say on the actual course of the campaign, but more on the alleged *prodosia* of the Arab king. They were apologists for Maurice, and since this campaign was a dismal failure, the Greek historians were not anxious to expatiate on it. Hence the attempt in the previous sections to recover every bit of evidence for the reconstruction of the course of the campaign to which now may be added the reconstruction of the strategy that guided it. Another reason makes it necessary to go into this question: it was this joint federate-imperial expedition that led to the crisis in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations and the exile of Muḍīr, matters of considerable relevance in discussing the more important events that were to take place in the seventh century. A study of Muḍīr's strategy as far as Ctesiphon is concerned will throw light on how the quarrel between him and Maurice developed, about which there are only vague references. Maurice's strategy probably ran counter to that of Muḍīr, who was used to the southern approach to Ctesiphon from the direction of Ḥīra, the military landscape of which he was familiar. Thus it is possible that he favored a pincers movement against Ctesiphon which involved him only from the south while Maurice was attacking from the north.<sup>140</sup>

That Ctesiphon may have been on the mind of Muḍīr could derive some support from the events of the second Persian war of the reign of Justinian, especially the Persian campaign of 540. In that year Chosroes, and no doubt Lakhmid Muḍīr with him, scored a decisive victory over Byzantium when his victorious march through Oriens resulted in the capture of its capital, Antioch, the enslavement of many Antiochenes, and the building by Chosroes, on his return to Persia, of Chosro-Antiocheia on the model of Antioch near Ctesiphon, in which he settled the captives taken from Antioch.<sup>141</sup> The following year Belisarius opened a campaign against the Persians in Mesopotamia, but he did not accomplish much.<sup>142</sup> What is relevant is the role of Arethas, Muḍīr's father, in these two campaigns. Although Procopius, the chief historian of the Persian war, does not say anything about Arethas, it is impossible to believe that Ghassānid *foederati* were not involved in 540; they

<sup>139</sup> On this, see W. E. Kaegi, Jr., "Constantine's and Julian's Strategies of Strategic Surprise against the Persians," *Athenaeum* 59 (1981), 209–13, esp. note 1.

<sup>140</sup> He may even have approached Ḥīra from Wādī al-Sirḥān, not from the Euphrates front, thus reversing Khālid's march which led to the Yarmūk in 636.

<sup>141</sup> On Chosroes' campaign against Antioch in 540, see above, 235–36. It is not impossible that the Byzantines thought that the *Rhomaioi* in Chosro-Antiocheia, not far from Ctesiphon, could be counted on in any drive against Ctesiphon.

<sup>142</sup> For the Byzantine campaign of 541, see above, 226–30.

probably formed a contingent in the force that marched from Phoenicia Libanensis (where Arab federate power is attested) under the command of two dukes, Theoctistus and Molartzes,<sup>143</sup> for the relief of Antioch in 540. In Belisarius' campaign of 541, Arethas led Byzantine and Arab troops into Assyria where he raided. It was during this campaign in Mesopotamia and Assyria that Ctesiphon emerged as a possible Byzantine military target. Procopius mentions this not in the *History* but in the *Anecdota*, where he states that if Belisarius had not been occupied with domestic problems, involving the infidelity of his wife, Antonina, he might have crossed the Tigris and marched against Ctesiphon.<sup>144</sup> This is the historical "might-have-been" concerning Ctesiphon, involving Mundir's father and the *magister militum* Belisarius. Mundir may not have taken part in the campaign of 541 since he was probably too young, but he must have heard from his father about Ctesiphon and the involvement of the Ghassānids in its possible capture. Forty years later he was in a similar situation marching against Ctesiphon with the *magister militum* Maurice. It is not altogether impossible that Mundir, who represents the summit of the military power of the Ghassānids, could have had Ctesiphon in mind along the lines explored above, at least as a partner in a Byzantine-Ghassānid expedition.

Such audacity of strategic conception inevitably recalls the strategy and exploits of another Arab commander, Odenathus of Palmyra, who operated in the same area and whose assignment was similar to that of Mundir, namely, containing the aggressive military presence of Persia. Whether or not thoughts of Odenathus crossed the mind of Mundir must remain a matter for speculation, but the strategy of the two bear a striking similarity to each other. Both were hardy desert warriors, relying on secrecy, speed, and surprise, and their military operations involved the Persians and Ctesiphon, which Odenathus reached twice and besieged once without actually capturing it.<sup>145</sup> In the Greek

<sup>143</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.viii.2

<sup>144</sup> *Anecdota*, II.25. This raises the question of when Procopius was speaking the truth—in the *History* or the *Anecdota*? This passage in the *Anecdota* is not likely to be pure gossip and backbiting on the part of Procopius. This campaign of 541 came immediately on the heels of the Persian campaign of 540 which targeted and captured a Byzantine capital in Oriens, Antioch; thus it is not unlikely that the Byzantine campaign of 541 was a retaliatory one that contemplated the capture of Ctesiphon and that Procopius completely obscured it in the *History* while he was singing the praises of Belisarius. The reference in the *Anecdota* passage to the possibility that Belisarius could have freed the Byzantine prisoners of Chosro-Antiocheia established a sequence between the two campaigns. Not having said a word about Ctesiphon in the *History*, in connection with the campaign of 541, he could not very well make a complete about-face in the *Anecdota*, and dilate on a campaign against Ctesiphon, and so he just alluded to it.

<sup>145</sup> On Odenathus and his campaigns against the Persian Shāpūr I and Ctesiphon, see J. G. Février, *Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* (Paris, 1931), 79–90, and the more

historical tradition, Odenathus was alive in the consciousness of Byzantium in the sixth century. Procopius mentions him, and, what is more, as the savior of the Roman East;<sup>146</sup> while referring to his predecessors in the service of Clio, Evagrius refers to two historians of the third century, Nicostratus and Dexippus, both of whom wrote large-scale histories of the period, to which Odenathus belonged.<sup>147</sup> Muṣḍir was not a rude Arab pastoralist, but a cultivated, Romanized and Hellenized Arab, who could certainly read accounts of his Palmyrene Arab predecessor, although it remains an open question whether he actually did so.

Palmyra and its distinguished couple, Odenathus and Zenobia, were also alive in the Arab historical consciousness. In fact Arabic histories of the Arabs written in Muslim times practically start with this period,<sup>148</sup> the second half of the third century, with Palmyra, the Tanūkhid Jaḍīma, and the Lakhmid ʿAmr ibn-ʿAdī, but not much before it. The Arabs of pre-Islamic times must have been even more vividly aware of these important figures in their history, since they were closer in time to them. This was especially true of the Ghassānids, who flourished only some two centuries after the fall of Palmyra and lived in the same area as the Palmyrenes, full of associations that reminded them of Odenathus and Zenobia.<sup>149</sup>

If they had forgotten the name of the Palmyrene queen, a town on the Euphrates named after her was well known to the Ghassānids and would have reminded them of her.<sup>150</sup> Although Aurelian destroyed Palmyra in the third century, it had been restored by Justinian and was associated with the name of Solomon, who was erroneously thought to be its original builder. Muṣḍir's

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recent and authoritative work of J. Starcky and M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre*, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient (Paris, 1985).

<sup>146</sup> Procopius, *History*, II.v.6

<sup>147</sup> See above, 411–12.

<sup>148</sup> See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 613–27.

<sup>149</sup> Although Aurelian destroyed the city, Palmyrene Arabs must have continued to live in the vicinity and in the region, and so memories of their vanished supremacy under Odenathus and Zenobia must have remained alive in the short period that separates the fall of the city and the rise of the Ghassānid Arabs some two centuries later. These local memories must have revived with the restoration of the city under Justinian. A reflection of the fact that memories of Palmyra could not have vanished from the consciousness of the Arabs of the region, especially those who belonged to the very Arab group that had ruled the city, is provided by the Muslim historian Balāḍurī. While speaking of the conquest of Sind, he refers to the governorship of al-Ḥakam ibn-ʿAwāna over Sind. Al-Ḥakam builds a city in the region and asks the elders of his tribe, Kalb, to suggest a name for the new city; they suggest Tadmur (Palmyra), in addition to Damascus and Ḥims. The tribe of Kalb was settled in the region of Tadmur, but Tadmur was not their city, as it was that of the Palmyrene Arabs of the days of Odenathus and Zenobia. And yet the Kalbites could still think of Tadmur/Palmyra when they were in faraway India in the 8th century; see Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, ed. S. Munajjid (Cairo, 1956), 542–43.

<sup>150</sup> On Zenobia, the Byzantine town and fortress on the Euphrates, in the course of the Persian wars of the 6th century, see Procopius, *History*, II.v.4–7.

father, Arethas, supervised the area near the *Strata Diocletiana*, and a quarrel with the Lakhmids in the thirties was one of the causes of the second Persian war. One of the Ghassānids, according to the historian Ḥamza,<sup>151</sup> was in charge of Palmyra, as *Ṣāhib* Tadmur. So this had been a city of Arab warriors but was now a Christian city, and both features would have appealed to the Ghassānids, hardy warriors and zealous Christians.<sup>152</sup>

Finally, al-Nābigha, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids later in the century, mentions Tadmur/Palmyra in one of his odes and associates it with Solomon. In one of the fragments attributed to him he refers to Odenathus himself.<sup>153</sup> In view of all this, it is not improbable that Munḍir's self-image was that of a sixth-century Odenathus fighting for the Christian Roman Empire, as his third-century predecessor had done for the pagan empire.

#### IX. *PRODOSIA*

The charge of treachery leveled against the Ghassānid king Munḍir was the most remarkable in the history of charges made against the Arab client-kings of Byzantium in the proto-Byzantine period. While the same charge against his father, Arethas, was most probably the expression of *Kaiserkritik* in the pages of a historiographer, Procopius, and remained as such without influencing imperial policy or attitude toward the Arab federate king and his Ghassānids, the one leveled against Munḍir originated with the *magister militum*, Maurice, and then found its way into the pages of Byzantine historiography, both secular and ecclesiastical. It was also a remarkable episode in that Munḍir was himself the object of treachery twice, first at the beginning of his

<sup>151</sup> On this, see above, 200, 209–18.

<sup>152</sup> The Christian character of Palmyra is reflected even in the Islamic sources: the early Abbāsīd poet Abū Nuwās speaks of its churches when he arrived there on his way to Egypt. It is also noteworthy that when it capitulated to Khālīd ibn-Walīd, its inhabitants did not embrace Islam; see Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, 132. For the verse in Abū Nuwās, see *Diwān Abū Nuwās*, ed. A. al-Ghazālī (Beirut, 1982), p. 482, verse 7. The bishops of Palmyra in this proto-Byzantine period are well known; see Devreesse, *PA*, 206. The last recorded reference to Palmyra as a Christian city in this period, just before the Muslim Conquest of Oriens, occurs in the *Life* of St. Anastasius the Persian, as well noted by W. Kaegi. But it remained a Christian bishopric in Islamic times and had a bishop named Johānnan in the 9th century, consecrated by Patriarch Dionysius of Tellmahre, who was himself consecrated in 818; see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, III, p. 453, no. 12.

<sup>153</sup> The ode is addressed to al-Nu'mān, the Lakhmid dynast of Ḥīra toward the end of the century; see W. Ahlwardt, *The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (repr. Osnabrück, 1972), p. 7, verses 4–5. Some doubts had been cast on the authenticity of this reference to Solomon and Tadmur, but they were made without knowledge that this association was well known in the 6th century when Tadmur received a new lease on life after Justinian renovated and fortified it; see above, 172–74. For the fragment that mentions Odenathus, see Ahlwardt, *Divans*, p. 166, frag. 13. What matters in this fragment is not its attribution to al-Nābigha, but that it is definitely a pre-Islamic fragment. All the rulers who are referred to in the fragment as having vanished are pre-Islamic rulers, including a Ghassānid by the patronymic "son of Jafna."

reign when Justin II tried to have him done away with in 572 through the *magister militum* Marcianus, and then toward the end of his reign when the conspiracy against him, implemented by Magnus, succeeded in having him arrested and then exiled for some twenty years to Sicily.<sup>154</sup> And yet it was he who was accused of treachery, *prodosia*, in the pages of the historians who reflected the charge and the official imperial attitude in their works, and the charge was applied not only to the person of Mundir but to the people to which he belonged, the Saracens. It was not only "Mundirkritik" but also "Araberkritik." The details of the conspiracy worked out cooperatively by both the Byzantine *imperium* in Constantinople and the Byzantine *ecclesia* in Antioch are an exciting detective story to unravel, while the conspiracy is in the best tradition of intrigues at the Byzantine court. However, the claims of this episode on the attention of the student of the sixth century are not limited to its being a striking example of Byzantine intrigue. This is marginal and is related to the history of gossip. There are four more important considerations, which make it necessary to subject it to a thorough and detailed examination.

1. It brought about the downfall of a distinguished federate commander who had served Byzantium loyally, as had his father and grandfather. It naturally alienated the federate Ghassānids, the protective shield of Byzantium against the Arabian Peninsula and the Lakhmids of Persia, bringing in its wake a decline in the power of the Ghassānids as a fighting force in the army of the Orient.

2. Even more important than this localized disaster within the context of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations and the efficiency of the Byzantine military machine in Oriens are the dire consequences it had on the course of Byzantine history in the seventh century. Some important genetic relationships that obtained between the alienation of the Ghassānids in the sixth century and the Arab Muslim Conquests in the seventh century have not been noted by historians of the conquests; only generalizations have been expressed.<sup>155</sup> These genetic relationships will be touched upon in this volume but will be discussed at length in the third part of this trilogy, when repercussions of this alienation will be treated together with the price Byzantium had to pay for ruffling Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in the reign of Tiberius.

3. The episode is equally important to a correct evaluation of the reign of Maurice. The reign was momentous in events that affected Byzantine history in both Europe and Oriens. It is a controversial reign, and its *autokrator* has been the subject of two extreme evaluations, but neither has taken into ac-

<sup>154</sup> See above, 347-56, and below, 455-63.

<sup>155</sup> For examples, see the authors cited by P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1951), I, 270 note 2.

count the fact that the two disasters of the reign of Heraclius—the Persian and the Arab assaults—are traceable to the reign of this emperor. So a true assessment of him must derive from an evaluation of how he handled both the Persian and the Arab problems.<sup>156</sup>

4. Finally, the episode is important to a reevaluation of some of the outstanding historiographers of Byzantium in the second half of the sixth century and the first half of the seventh: Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact, “the last major classical Roman historians.” They were all in the pay or the good graces of the Byzantine ruler in Constantinople or the patriarch of Antioch, and they reflected the official version of what happened, as perceived by both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*. The result is that their work has not escaped the *ira et studium* that are directed toward the Ghassānid king and the Byzantine *autokrator* respectively.

This section will discuss four aspects of the *prodosia* charge: (1) the two versions of the charge in John of Ephesus; (2) Tiberius’ involvement in the quarrel between Maurice and Muḏīr; (3) an examination and refutation of the charge; and (4) concluding general remarks.

## 1

The *prodosia* charge against Muḏīr related to the bridge on the Euphrates which the Byzantine army was expected to cross on its final thrust against Ctesiphon and which, as has been explained, was found to be destroyed when the Byzantine army arrived. The Greek sources are entirely silent on the bridge. John of Ephesus is the sole contemporary writer that discusses it and, what is more, in two versions containing some significant and crucial details.

### The First Version

The first version is shorter than the second. John of Ephesus relates that Maurice and Muḏīr quarreled after the bridge was found to be destroyed. Maurice accused him of having forewarned the Persians who thus destroyed the bridge; both of them wrote to Tiberius, each complaining of the other’s conduct; Tiberius tried to reconcile them but failed; finally, Maurice went to Constantinople and persuaded Tiberius to arrest Muḏīr and bring him to the capital:

CAPUT XL, de Mondir filio Hārith, et de accusatione in eum facta. Cum igitur comes Mauricius in Oriente copiis praecesset, cum Mondir rege Ṭayāye consilium iniit terram Persarum una invadere. Quamobrem, dies *aliquot* progressi donec e regione Beith Arāmāye pervenerunt, qua *est* urbs

<sup>156</sup> See below, 605–10.



regis Persarum, cum pontem quo se transituros et urbem regiam expugnatos exspectabant ante se intercisum invenissent, tum in rixam mutuam venerunt, cum Mauricius de Mondir censuisset eum ipsum ad Persas nuntium misisse eosque pontem solvisse. Itaque, cum inimicitiam et rixam inter se sevisent, nulla *re* effecta redierunt. Et exinde ad regem Tiberium alter contra alterum scribere inceperunt, quos conciliare rex valde studuit. Quod cum non potuisset, Mauricius ad regem ascendit eumque male et aspere accusavit, et rex accepit et, ira aspera contra Mondir repletus, operam dabat quomodo eum circumveniret et comprehensum ad urbem regiam venire faceret.<sup>157</sup>

John of Ephesus does not exculpate Mondir explicitly, although he does implicitly. On the other hand, he roundly accuses Maurice of having wickedly brought accusations against Mondir, which finally convinced the emperor of the necessity of removing him.

#### The Second Version

The second version tells roughly the same story but with some difference in tone and more information:

Rursus una Mauricius et Mondir filius Harith rex Tayāye una copiis suis collectis regiones Persarum via quae per desertum fert invaserunt. Et ingressi per regiones Persarum multas mansiones usque ad Beith Arāmāye penetraverunt, et, cum ad pontem magnum Beith Arāmāye pervenissent, quo se transgressos urbes magnas regias Persarum expugnatos esse confidebant, pons intercisus *esse* inventus est, quem Persae certiores facti interciderant. Itaque, cum ipsi et copiae eorum, et praesertim Romani destitutionem multam vidissent, tum ad rixam mutuam pervenerunt, et reversi sunt, cum nihil prosperum facere potuissent; et vix infractis animis se servare et ad terram Romanorum exire potuerunt, dum accusationes malas invicem scribunt, cum Mauricius de Mondir putasset eum ipsum antea nuntium misisse et Persis indicasse, *eosque* pontem intercidisse ne transgrederentur, quod falsum fuit. Regi autem labor multus fuit ducibus nuntios mittenti, et vix eos inter se conciliavit. Tandem vero Mauricius ad regem ascendit, nec an Mondir accusasset compertum est.<sup>158</sup>

This version appears to be a later one in the chronology of the composition of John's work. The author gives what must be the simplest and most natural explanation for the destruction of the bridge: the Persians, having become aware of the intentions of the Romans (the drive against their capital) simply

<sup>157</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 129, lines 18–32.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237, lines 6–25.

destroyed the bridge, which would have enabled the Byzantines to mount the offensive against Ctesiphon. Furthermore, he explicitly states that the accusation against Mundir was false.

It is curious that in this longer version John of Ephesus refrains from saying explicitly, as he did in the other version, that Maurice wickedly denounced Mundir to Tiberius. He only says that it is not certain that he accused Mundir before Tiberius when he went to Constantinople. This is curious and must derive from the fact that this passage was written after Maurice became emperor in 582 after the death of Tiberius. He may have wanted to be discreet since he lived in the capital within reach of Maurice. His flat denial that Mundir forewarned the Persians, noted in the preceding paragraph, could imply that in the time that elapsed between the writing of the first and second version the charge of *prodosia* had been bruited about and had so tarnished Mundir's reputation that John of Ephesus found it necessary to deny it unequivocally.

The two versions are noteworthy for two features that they have in common. First, the extraordinary position of Mundir is clear from both versions. Although Maurice was the supreme commander, he is bypassed by Mundir when the latter lodged his complaint, writing directly to the emperor in Constantinople. It is a reflection of the high position that Mundir had reached by that time that he could dispense with the formality of approaching the emperor through the *magisterium militum* in Antioch. This is further corroborated by the fact that Maurice could not take disciplinary action against Mundir, whom he thought betrayed him, in spite of the fact that he was given plenipotentiary powers by Tiberius who empowered him to appoint or dismiss whomever he wanted. This is also a reflection of the power vested in Mundir by Tiberius when he visited the capital in 580. Maurice's inability to dismiss or punish him clearly shows the new power of the Ghassānid federate king. Only the emperor in Constantinople could discipline him, the emperor who had crowned him for the second time and conferred on him the extraordinary *Basileia*.

The position of Tiberius in this affair is also noteworthy. He had expected so much of his two new appointees, Maurice and Mundir, that he was greatly disappointed and grieved to hear of the discord between them. It is noteworthy that at first he did not take what Maurice said in his dispatches at face value. He was no fool and had been an admirer of the military prowess of the Ghassānid king, whom he was glad to have back in the Byzantine fold in 575 and again to confer on him the *Basileia*. He may have been impressed by what Mundir said in his dispatch, explaining his own strategy for the campaign and the flaws in Maurice's. This is clear from his attempt to involve leading men in the administration to attempt to reconcile the two.

## 2

The quarrel between Maurice and Muḍīr and the involvement of the emperor passed through three stages: the dispatches that both Muḍīr and Maurice sent to Tiberius from Oriens; the attempt of Tiberius to reconcile them; and finally the journey of Maurice to Constantinople where he was able to convince Tiberius of Muḍīr's "guilt."

1. The contents of the dispatches sent by Muḍīr and Maurice to Constantinople are not stated by John of Ephesus, but it is not difficult to reconstruct what they must have contained. John of Ephesus says only that Maurice complained to Tiberius about Muḍīr and made accusations. But since the context is a military one—the failed campaign of 580/81 against Ctesiphon—it is not difficult to reconstruct the main features of his complaints and accusations. Maurice would have outlined his strategy against Ctesiphon and accused Muḍīr of disobeying him, thus contributing to the defeat. He possibly included the accusation related to the broken bridge and the refusal to cross the Euphrates during the retreat in order to contain the Lakhmids and neutralize their missiles. Muḍīr, on the other hand, would have complained about the unsound conduct of the campaign concerning Maurice's two points: the bridge was destroyed by the Persians, who correctly understood that the target was their capital, and it was only natural for them to destroy it; crossing the Euphrates in order to contain the Lakhmid harassment of the imperial army was also unsound since the Lakhmids would have entrapped the Ghassānid host after a difficult crossing, watched and contested by the enemy.

Such must have been the specific charges that the two commanders made against each other. But it is also clear that the two had entirely different strategies for the conduct of the war and the capture of Ctesiphon, and these can only be surmised. Maurice was a Byzantine and most likely chose to conduct the campaign along the classical lines of Byzantine military strategy such as may be found in Byzantine military manuals of the period. He would have been conservative; his model was most probably another Byzantine, Julian, who, two centuries before, had attempted the same goal and, one might add, with the same result. Maurice had been only recently brought out of civilian life as a *notarius* and given an extraordinary military command in Oriens by Tiberius. So he was probably anxious to bring a protracted war on the eastern front to a close by an attack on the Persian heartland, a stroke that would have been an appropriate background for his elevation to the throne, which he probably coveted even at this time.

Muḍīr, on the other hand, most probably had a different strategy. Unlike Maurice, he had been a veteran of the eastern wars for more than a quarter century and since 563 had been in charge of the Ghassānid limitrophe. He had rehearsed the possible future capture of Ctesiphon by the capture of Ḥīra,

the capital of the Persian client-king, his Lakhmid namesake. How exactly he hoped to capture Ctesiphon and by which route is not clear. But his strategy must have been entirely different from that of Maurice. The latter, however, was the *magister militum* with plenipotentiary powers, and so Munḍir was placed in the difficult position of having to fight in terrain not very familiar to him and also take part in an amphibious operation, all of which ran counter to all that he believed in—surprise, secrecy, and speed. Besides, Maurice's plan presented the spectacle of a complex and complicated operation that was doomed to failure from the beginning. Gallienus had left Odenathus to fight the Persians alone without any encumbrance from a Roman general; and Munḍir and Byzantine arms would have fared better if the new Odenathus had been left to fight the Persians of the sixth century alone.

2. The attempt of Tiberius to reconcile the two was also noteworthy in a variety of ways. Normally a federate king would have been ordered to obey the *magister militum per Orientem*, especially one with plenipotentiary powers such as Maurice was endowed with. That Tiberius opted for mediation reflects the high position of Munḍir, made even stronger by his second coronation in 580. As has been pointed out, this course also suggests that the emperor did not immediately accept the accusations made against Munḍir by Maurice.

John of Ephesus does not specify who the mediators were but leaves them anonymous. The chances are that they were, at least *inter alios*, Gregory, the patriarch of Antioch, and Magnus, the well-known *commerciarius* in Oriens. Both became involved in the plot to trap Munḍir shortly after, when he was invited to Evaria to meet both of them and was trapped. This suggests some former involvement of these two in the reconciliation attempt. Both were natural choices as mediators since they were extremely well-known figures in Oriens with whom Munḍir had to deal. Gregory, although an ecclesiastic, was also heavily involved in the secular affairs of Oriens and was entrusted with important and delicate missions by the central government. He would thus have been the ideal mediator of the quarrel between Munḍir and Maurice. Furthermore, Magnus was actually described by John of Ephesus as Munḍir's *patronus*, who pleaded his case before Tiberius in Constantinople.<sup>159</sup>

In spite of the prestige of the mediators, such as Gregory and Magnus, the attempts failed. Did these two really want a reconciliation, and did they discharge their duties honestly? The chances are that they did not. Gregory was a rabid Chalcedonian who, as patriarch of Antioch, was a notorious persecutor of the Monophysites—at least in the Monophysite historiographical mirror—a worthy successor of Ephraim. Moreover, he may have been peeved by the prestige that Munḍir acquired during his last visit to Constantinople in

<sup>159</sup> See below, 456–57.



580, when Tiberius at his request decided to stay the persecution against the Monophysites. On his way back to Oriens, Mundir stopped in Antioch and made known Tiberius' edict with instructions for Gregory to implement it.<sup>160</sup> All this could not have endeared Mundir to Gregory's heart, who must have thought that the reconciliation would make Mundir's position even stronger.

The same may be said of Magnus but with greater truth. His treachery as a turncoat, when he betrayed Mundir whose *patronus* he was, is well known and will be discussed later. He could not have been a true friend of the Ghassānid king. Magnus was probably a Roman, like Maurice, as his name suggests. Thus he may have shared the racial prejudice of the Romans toward the Saracen king, whom he probably looked upon as a "barbarian"; and if he was a Chalcedonian, this would have been an additional ground of antipathy toward the Monophysite client-king. Also, in 573 Magnus had sustained a military defeat<sup>161</sup> at the hands of the Persian general Adarmahan. This may have been ultimately related to the defection of the Ghassānid king for three years and his withdrawal from the service of Byzantium. So Magnus may have nursed a grudge against him. Finally, his opportunism may have been involved in this affair. Maurice, the *magister militum per Orientem* with plenipotentiary powers and the prospective *autokrator*, was more important to Magnus than the Saracen client-king. It is just possible that he decided that his best interests lay with Maurice and not with Mundir, toward whom he may already have been ill-disposed, and consequently did not play a clean game in the reconciliation, as he was to play an even less clean one when he outrightly betrayed him before Maurice. If these two, Gregory and Magnus, were the mediators, as is most likely, then Mundir was unfortunate in having two such "operators" who, moreover, could have been working against him even at this stage before they actually betrayed him shortly after at Evaria.

Maurice was a decent and pious man, and in all fairness to him it is necessary to discuss what might have led him to think that Mundir had betrayed him, before he actually accused him of treachery and ranged Tiberius on his side to the point of ordering his arrest. Maurice no doubt discussed with Mundir the strategy of his campaign against Ctesiphon from the very beginning of their march from Circesium, especially the crossing of the "great bridge." Mundir, who held different views and was possibly doubtful of the competence of Maurice to lead such an ambitious expedition, must have disagreed with him and expressed this in strong terms. When they reached the bridge and found it damaged or destroyed, a great disappointment for Maurice, it would not have been unnatural for him to think that Mundir had

<sup>160</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 909–10.

<sup>161</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, V.x.

betrayed him. Mundir's passivity throughout the march<sup>162</sup> and his possible coolness toward its strategy may also have encouraged Maurice to be suspicious of him.

The less immediate and direct background to this mutual suspicion must be related to the status of Mundir and his denominational persuasion. Mundir was a Saracen; hence, from the point of view of a Roman, a *prodotes* almost by definition, as the Romans thought of all "barbarians." Maurice had trained a citizen army when he first took up his post as *magister militum*, and he probably viewed the barbarian *foederati* as unreliable and treacherous allies, a thought that was to be enshrined in the *Stratēgikon*.<sup>163</sup> Finally, Mundir was a Monophysite, and, from the Chalcedonians' point of view, Monophysites were traitors to the true doctrines of the church. So almost everything about Mundir could suggest to Maurice, a Chalcedonian, that he was dealing with an unreliable ally. The step from such a perception of Mundir to thinking that he was actually a traitor, a *prodotes*, who forewarned the Persians was not difficult to take.

The last straw must have been Mundir's resounding victory over the Lakhmids immediately after the retreat after the battle of Callinicum.<sup>164</sup> Maurice was discouraged by the failure of his ambitious campaign against Ctesiphon, which he had thought would redound to his greater glory, and was humiliated, while the federate king was scoring victories against the Lakhmids and Persians that reverberated in Oriens. John of Ephesus states in the description of the quarrel between the two that the march and the retreat were attended by great difficulties and fatigues, and this could have enhanced the animosity that John of Ephesus says existed between them.<sup>165</sup> Anger is a short madness, and it is easy to understand how Maurice permitted himself to say categorically that Mundir was a traitor who forewarned the Persians and thus frustrated his plan.

3. This leads to the final point: what swayed Tiberius against Mundir so that he became involved in a conspiracy to trap him and bring him under arrest to Constantinople, although he had welcomed him back after the failure of a conspiracy against him in the early 570s and had honored him so splendidly in 580. Both accounts in John of Ephesus state that this happened, not when Maurice was sending dispatches from Oriens, but after he arrived personally in Constantinople. It is possible that the dispatches spoke only of insubordination and disobedience on the part of Mundir to commands from

<sup>162</sup> As noted by Stein, *Studien*, 93.

<sup>163</sup> See below, 571–72.

<sup>164</sup> See above, 420–25.

<sup>165</sup> On the *inimicitia* and *rixa* that obtained between the two, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 129, line 26.



Maurice and that more serious charges were brought against Mundir when he spoke to the emperor personally in Constantinople. Perhaps it was then that he made the charge of treachery and collusion with the Persians. He could not commit this false charge to writing in dispatches, but reserved it for the audience with the emperor in Constantinople. It is also perfectly possible that Maurice became a rallying point for the Chalcedonians in the capital, led by Patriarch Eutychius and helped by Gregory of Antioch, and that this formidable combination of the *magisterium* of the Orient and the patriarchate of two sees broke the resistance of Tiberius, who also may have been presented for the first time with the charge of treachery against the empire. When it is realized that Maurice was not only his trusted *magister militum* but also his future son-in-law and successor, it is not difficult to understand the change of mood in Tiberius, who may now have been genuinely converted to the view of the opposition. The charge of treachery was now leveled against Mundir either for the first time or presented with more cogency in Constantinople after only hints and innuendoes in military dispatches from Oriens.

## 3

The *prodosia* charge, absurd and incredible in itself, was stated with specifics only by John of Ephesus, who also dismissed it by giving the most natural explanation for the destruction of the bridge. And yet the charge trumped up by Maurice was repeated by a chorus of Greek historians who were moving in the Chalcedonian orbit against the Monophysite client-king. The charge stuck to Mundir throughout the ages until it was examined in the twentieth century by E. Stein, who carefully analyzed it and rejected it, and the matter should have rested there. However, it was later revived by R. Devresse and then championed by P. Goubert, who took over uncritically what the former had said. Devresse condemned both Mundir and his father, Arethas, as traitors to the cause of the Romans. The refutation of the charge against the father was undertaken by the present writer when examining a similar charge against Arethas made by Procopius. Since then Walter Kaegi has rejected Goubert's conclusions, especially when the latter related them to the Muslim Conquest from his own peculiar perspective.<sup>166</sup> As has been pointed out earlier, the *prodosia* charge against Mundir is extremely important not only in Byzantine historiography but also in Byzantine history. Since it is still alive in the consciousness of historians, it is necessary to treat their views in some detail.

The most incisive and impartial analysis of the episode comes from that critical and penetrating Byzantinist, Ernst Stein, who presented the most co-

<sup>166</sup> For the *prodosia* charge against the father, Arethas, see the present writer in "Procopius and Arethas," *BZ* 50 (1957), 39-67, 362-82; for W. Kaegi on Goubert, see below, 452-53.

gent refutation of the charge. Having drawn attention to the importance of John of Ephesus vis-à-vis the prejudiced Greek sources of the period, he argued along two lines. (1) Mundir had no motive for acting treacherously. None related to gain or advantage can be suspected on his part since he had achieved two of his greatest ambitions only recently—the staying of the persecution against his Monophysite brethren and the attainment of the highest secular honor by his second coronation when he visited Tiberius in Constantinople in 580. The Persian king, on the other hand, had nothing comparable to offer Mundir in return for treachery against the Byzantine *autokrator*. (2) Those who had vested interests in seeing Mundir fall were the ones who really could be charged with treachery. Stein goes so far as to suspect that it was not so much Maurice as the Chalcedonians, headed by the patriarch of Constantinople himself, Eutychius, who really engineered the whole conspiracy against Mundir, which culminated in the charge of *prodosia*. He rightly points out that Eutychius, the archenemy of Monophysitism, was especially peeved by Mundir's successes in Constantinople in 580 when he was able to persuade Tiberius to rescind the edict against the Monophysites, and that he was instrumental in promoting the interests of Maurice as the future successor of Tiberius.

Stein concludes his defense of Mundir and the primary source, John of Ephesus, by pointing out that Tiberius' reluctance to take steps against Mundir testifies to his innocence. Also, the fact that he was not allowed to see the emperor when he was captured and brought to Constantinople speaks loudly in his favor and against his enemies. The powerful defense of Mundir by Stein deserves to be exhumed from his *Studien*, which appeared so long ago:

Die ungenügende Beachtung, die vielfach noch immer den orientalischen Quellen gegenüber den griechischen zuteil wird, hat bewirkt, daß auch nach dem Erscheinen von Nöldekes Schrift über die Ghassanischen Fürsten, welche die Verhältnisse richtig beurteilt, die modernen Historiker der Darstellung des Euagrius und Theophylakt kritiklos folgend an den Verrat des Mundar glauben. Da Nöldeke sich nicht näher darauf eingelassen hat, ist hier die Beweisführung dafür am Platze, daß Mundar kein Verräter, sondern das Opfer einer abscheulichen Intrige ist. Voraussetzung des Verrates ist stets die seitens des Verräters gehegte Erwartung, sein Verfahren werde ihm irgend einen Vorteil bringen; für Mundar aber lagen die Dinge so, daß jede Veränderung seiner damaligen Stellung ihm nachteilig sein mußte, aus dem einfachen Grunde, weil er das absolute Maximum dessen schon besaß, was ihm nach menschlichem Ermessen überhaupt erreichbar war. Seine Erscheinung ist beispiellos in der langen römischen Geschichte. Wiewohl militärisch nur Spezialist in einer ganz

bestimmten Art des Kampfes, leistete er nichtsdestoweniger in dieser ausgezeichnete Dienste, so daß er billig als einer der ersten Feldherrn des Reiches gelten konnte und wahrscheinlich, worauf die äußere Anerkennung, die ihm zuteil wurde, hinweist, auch galt; die Verleihung des *Diadems* ließ seinen Beamtencharakter in dem Maße zurücktreten, in dem sein fürstlicher Rang betont wurde; da es ihm, dem gefeierten weltlichen Führer der Monophysiten, sogar gelungen war, die innere Religionspolitik des Reiches in seinem Sinne entscheidend zu beeinflussen, so gab es in der Tat nichts, was er sich noch hätte wünschen können, zumal auch die materiellen Zuwendungen, die er vom Kaiser erhielt, schwerlich von dem über beschränktere Mittel verfügenden Perserkönig hätten erreicht, geschweige denn überboten werden können. Fehlt also für die Annahme, daß der bundesgenössische König, der römische Bürger und Patrizier Flavius Alamundarus im Einverständnis mit dem Reichsfeinde gehandelt habe, jede vernunftgemäße Voraussetzung, so ist umgekehrt das natürliche Bestreben der dyophysitischen Eiferer, sich des Mannes zu entledigen, der der Monophysitenverfolgung ein Ende gemacht hatte und ein Hindernis ihrer Wiederaufnahme war, ein zureichender Grund für die Machenschaften, denen Mundar erlegen ist. Daß Mauricius sich zum Werkzeug dieser Richtung hergab, darf nicht wundernehmen: der Patriarch Eutychius, damals wohl der schärfste Vertreter der Verfolgung, hatte seine guten Gründe, wenn er den Mauricius als einzig möglichen Nachfolger des Tiberius hinstellte (*Eustrat. v. Eutyhii*, Migne Gr. 86, 2352 f.), und es ist immerhin bemerkenswert, daß er das gerade, im Jahre 580 tat, in dem Mundars Sturz erfolgt ist. Damit ist zusammenzuhalten, daß später auch Na'mans Verhaftung letzten Endes durch sein Festhalten am Monophysitismus veranlaßt worden sein soll, und daß die Verfolgung noch unter Tiberius wieder einsetzte (vgl. *Joh. v. Eph. IV 42*, p. 174. *Mich. Syr. II 344*). Schließlich kann auch die Abneigung des Kaisers Tiberius, gegen Mundar einzuschreiten, für dessen Unschuld geltend gemacht werden, und daß man nach seiner Gefangennahme ihn verhinderte, beim Kaiser in Audienz zu erscheinen, spricht ebenso für ihn wie gegen seine Feinde.<sup>167</sup>

Stein is the only scholar who took the correct measure of the dimensions of the *prodosia* charge in its entirety and gave Mundir his rightful place in the history of the period, indeed in Byzantine history, with unusual perspicacity and impartiality. He was able to transcend the prejudice of Greek historians of the period and return to the reliable primary source, John of Ephesus. In this he was guided by the conclusions of the most distinguished Orientalist of all

<sup>167</sup> *Studien*, 95–96.

time, Theodor Nöldeke, on the relative merit of two sets of sources, the Greek and the Syriac—teamwork at its best.<sup>168</sup> In the last analysis, the resolution of the problem of the *prodosia* charge is one of sources: who was speaking the truth—John of Ephesus or the four Greek historians?<sup>169</sup>

Little could be added to Stein's spirited defense of Mundir, but our knowledge of the Ghassānid phylarchate has considerably increased during the time since he wrote. Thus a few further comments are in order here. Mundir's behavior and conduct *after* the affair of the great bridge does not at all suggest the traitor. On the contrary, it presents the spectacle of a loyal Byzantine federate commander who was doing his duty both during the retreat from the bridge and at the battle of Callinicum. Furthermore, after Callinicum he goes to war against the Arab clients of the Persians, the Lakhmids, and inflicts a resounding defeat on them. Even Procopius, who leveled the charge of *prodosia* against his father, was able to lift the charge when Arethas went to war with the Lakhmids after the conclusion of the second Persian war.<sup>170</sup>

Although Stein was aware of the role of Mundir in reconciling warring Monophysite groups, he was interested primarily in the political and military history of the Ghassānids. But knowledge of the attachment of the Ghassānids to Christianity is essential for understanding their relation and loyalty to Byzantium. Although Monophysite, they looked at Byzantium as the Christian Roman Empire to which they belonged spiritually, and to the *autokrator* as the protector of Christianity and their lord; even their king Mundir considered himself to be his servitor.<sup>171</sup>

The Ghassānids were an Arab group that, after long wanderings in the Arabian Peninsula, were finally able, with their swords, to carve for themselves a corner in the Byzantine Near East and were quite happy with their Byzantine connection contracted through the *foedus* of 502. They were satisfied with their assignment to the limitrophe between the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean, where they were sandwiched between the desert and the sea, and they had no desire to change their comfortable status. What was said of the Goths in the *Getica* of Jordanes may with equal truth be said of the Ghassānids, that "service to the Empire" was "the *raison d'être* of the Goths."<sup>172</sup>

<sup>168</sup> It should also be pointed out in this connection that Stein and Nöldeke did not form a mutual admiration society. Stein criticized Nöldeke and disagreed with him: see *Studien*, 51 note 6. And Nöldeke was not an uncritical admirer of John of Ephesus; see *GF*, 24 note 2.

<sup>169</sup> On this see below, 583–97.

<sup>170</sup> See *History*, II.xxviii.13

<sup>171</sup> On this see below, 459–61.

<sup>172</sup> See W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans* (Princeton, 1980), 34 note 54. The author also quoted Gerhard Wirth on the federate states of the late Roman Empire, where the latter spoke of barbarians and their customary attacks "whose object was (for the attackers) to be taken into the Empire and then give up their own political existence in favor of the advantages offered by service to the Empire." This applies eminently and admirably to the Ghassānids, too.

The most fantastic charges against Muḍīr by a modern historian have come from Goubert, who in various contexts in his book expressed himself strongly against Muḍīr. Brushing aside what Nöldeke and Stein had said on the subject, he accused the Ghassānid king of duplicity, of playing the Byzantines against the Persians and vice-versa, in order to organize at the expense of both an Arab kingdom! He even goes on to say that this dream was realized by Abū Bakr and ʿUmar!<sup>173</sup> The absurdity of such views is so evident that they hardly need refutation since they rest on almost total ignorance of Ghassānid history and the tone of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. Goubert was a "Chalcedonian" priest who followed what the Greek Orthodox historians of the period had said on Muḍīr and mistrusted the testimony of the Monophysite writer, John of Ephesus. In holding such views on Muḍīr, Goubert was misled by what his predecessor, Devreesse, had said on the subject. Devreesse was hardly an authority on the Ghassānids, but Goubert describes him an *un éminent orientaliste*.<sup>174</sup>

Goubert did not limit himself to charging Muḍīr with treachery but went beyond this to make judgments on the Muslim Conquest and relate it to the fall of Maurice in 602 at the hands of Phocas. In so doing, he was exonerating Maurice of the blame, which naturally lay on him, for having prepared for the Muslim Conquest by his treatment of Muḍīr and the Ghassānids *inter alia*. His judgment on the Muslim Conquest was derivative from his desire to glorify his hero, Maurice. If Goubert was vague about the Ghassānids and the truth about Arab-Byzantine relations, he was much more so about the great historical movement that was the Muslim Conquest, knowledge of which he derived from secondary sources. Walter Kaegi has saved the present writer the trouble of replying:

It would be erroneous to claim, as Paul Goubert once did, that Maurice was an excellent emperor who would have been able to reorganize the eastern provinces and develop satisfactory diplomatic relations with Persia if only he had not met death at the hands of the usurper Phocas. Goubert asserted the thesis that "602 equals 622," that it was the overthrow and execution of Maurice that gave historical significance to Muḥammad's hijra, that only the events of 602 made possible the emergence of Islam as a major religion and factor. Goubert's thesis involves erroneous leaps of logic. There were many deficiencies in Maurice's policies with the Arabs long before his own overthrow. Goubert never developed his thesis fully, perhaps because he came to realize that Maurice had so many faults that its principal original tenets were unsustainable. His

<sup>173</sup> See Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 253.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, note 2, a strange use of the word *orientaliste*.

Byzantinocentric thesis was so flawed that it no longer deserves serious consideration. Very few Islamicists are probably even aware of his publications expressing his points.<sup>175</sup>

In the last analysis, the resolution of the *prodosia* charge is related to *Quellenforschung*, and this involves two sets of sources that tell two different stories: there are the Oriental sources, Syriac in language, the authors of which are Monophysite in their denominational affiliation, and there are the Byzantine ones, Greek and Chalcedonian. The first have the singular advantage of being represented by John of Ephesus, a contemporary who gave a detailed account of the events that led to the charge of *prodosia* and who exculpated Mundir. The second are partly contemporary and partly not, derivative, and tell very briefly and dismissively, without any significant details, the story of a federate king who betrayed the empire. The question then arises as to who is telling the truth, a matter that could only be resolved by a close examination of these authors. This has been done in this volume,<sup>176</sup> and it has been concluded that John of Ephesus is to be followed, a primary source and honest churchman, rather than the group of Greek historians who were in the employ and pay of the powerful personalities that brought about the downfall of Mundir or who were singing the praises of the emperor, who had been the *magister militum* with whom Mundir had the misfortune of being associated.

## 4

General Conclusions on *Prodosia*

A close examination of the course of events that led to the indictment of Mundir suggests that his relations with the central government were bound to be ruffled and to result in the charge of treachery. In view of the complexity of this problem, explored at length in this chapter, it is well that the conclusions be presented briefly.

1. There was first the clash of personalities, between the Ghassānid king and the Byzantine *magister*. Almost everything conspired to put them at odds with each other. Mundir's self-image and his perception of Maurice squared ill with the latter's self-image and his own perception of Mundir. The first was a professional soldier who for some twenty years had been trained and prepared to take up his duties as the federate commander-in-chief, and who had developed his own style in dealing with the threat from the Persians and their allies, the Lakhmids. He must have looked down on Maurice as an upstart, a newcomer to the eastern front, a civilian with no military background, and he

<sup>175</sup> See Walter Kaegi in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. F. Clover and S. Humphreys (Madison, Wisc., 1989), 193.

<sup>176</sup> See below, 583–97.



certainly must have voiced disapproval of the ambitious campaign against Ctesiphon and the strategic conception that inspired it.

Maurice, on the other hand, was a *magister militum* plenipotentiary, a Roman who had his own conceptions of how to fight a war against the Persians, with Roman ideas of discipline deriving from military manuals. He probably thought the war must be fought by Roman citizens and not by what he considered unreliable allies whose loyalty and reliability he questioned, a perception that found its way into the *Stratēgikon*, which, some argue, goes back to Maurice himself.<sup>177</sup> The two took part in the military operations of the two years preceding the campaign of Ctesiphon, and so there was already friction between them, which was enhanced by the honors and extraordinary position conferred on both by Tiberius. Even Muḍir's last victory against the Lakhmids worked against him as it was the last straw.

2. The complexity of Muḍir's personality contributed substantially to the charge of *prodosia*. He was not only a soldier but also a commanding figure in the theological controversies that divided Byzantium in the sixth century. Thus the interplay of ecclesiastical and secular factors made him even more vulnerable. Had he been a mere soldier, he might have weathered the storm unleashed by Maurice against him. But as leader of the Monophysites, who tried to compose their differences and finally scored a victory in 580 with Tiberius' imperial edict in favor of the group, he earned the inveterate enmity and hatred of the Chalcedonian camp, represented by two of the most powerful ecclesiastics of the period, the patriarch of Constantinople, Eutychius, and the patriarch of Antioch, Gregory. These two found in the Chalcedonian Maurice, in whom was united the secular and ecclesiastical opposition to Muḍir, the perfect instrument of their designs, and they succeeded. Thus Muḍir found the imperial and secular establishments, presided over by the most powerful personalities of the period, ranged against him. And Tiberius, good-natured and sympathetic to Muḍir as he was, could not resist the impact of the formidable combination of the patriarchate and the *magisterium* united against Muḍir and accusing him of treachery.

3. Thus, for circumstances beyond his control, Muḍir was trapped. Not only did he suffer for his denominational affiliation, which was completely irrelevant to the charge of *prodosia*, but also the course of Roman history and the succession of the *diadochoi* after Justinian operated to his disadvantage. While his father was protected by the pro-Arab policy of Justinian and the Monophysite Theodora, Muḍir lived in a Byzantium ruled by strongly Chalcedonian and anti-Monophysite emperors—Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice—and thus he lacked the protective imperial umbrella that had covered

<sup>177</sup> On this, see below, 569, 571–72.

his father and the Monophysite movement. He was also especially unfortunate in that the ideal *magister militum* in Oriens, with whom he could have worked harmoniously, Justinianus, had recently died. The victor of Melitene had a warm relationship with Mundir; he had met him at that memorable conference outside the shrine of St. Sergius at Ruṣāfa, and he finally brought him back to the Byzantine fold after his defection in 575. Unlike Maurice, who had an inferiority complex about his military ability and was jealous of the federate king's successes, Justinianus was a fine soldier, who had scored the smashing victory of Melitene and consequently would have had no difficulty in getting along well with Mundir. Unfortunately he fell from grace shortly after his victory and then died. Thus the *magisterium* fell to a civilian, Maurice, a *notarius* and *comes excubitorum* with no military experience in the eastern wars. The clash was inevitable between *magister* and phylarch; it conduced to quarrels and suspicions that finally led to the charge of treachery followed by the arrest and exile of Mundir.

#### X. THE FALL OF MUNDIR

After listening to complaints from both sides, and trying in vain to reconcile the two, Emperor Tiberius finally inclined to Maurice and decided to have Mundir arrested and brought to Constantinople. This decision set in motion the extraordinary events that followed and that ruffled Arab-Byzantine relations. They were preceded by a conspiracy for arresting Mundir, the initiation of which was suggested by Magnus who was also entrusted with its implementation.

The only detailed source for this transaction is the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus. As this was the occasion for the break in Arab-Byzantine relations, it is necessary to study it intensively with a commentary on the important historical data provided by this account. This is especially so since accounts of this conspiracy do not appear in general histories of Byzantium, not even in specialized works on the reign of Maurice.<sup>178</sup> Justice has been done to it only in a monograph that appeared early in this century and in unpublished doctoral dissertations.<sup>179</sup> In addition to providing the background for the Ghassānid revolt in the early 580s, the discussion will throw more light on Magnus, the powerful and influential person who began his career of public service in the reign of Justinian and endured throughout the reigns of Justin II and Tiberius. His career has been in the hands of administrative and

<sup>178</sup> It is discussed by neither Vasiliev nor Ostrogorsky in their standard histories of Byzantium. The most recent work on the reign of Maurice hardly touches on it: Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 274. It might have had a place in the introductory chapters to the Persian wars of Maurice, *ibid.*, 197–295.

<sup>179</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 93–94, where it is buried; and Turtledove, *Successors of Justinian*, 314–18.

economic historians,<sup>180</sup> but his share in the conspiracy to arrest Muḏīr and his later intervention in Ghassānid affairs add a new dimension to his career, in the political history of Oriens during the reigns of Justin II and Tiberius. The various phases of the conspiracy, detailed in John of Ephesus, will be discussed below.<sup>181</sup>

Magnus, described as *curator* by John of Ephesus, was the friend and *patronus* of Muḏīr, on whom the latter relied to represent him at the court in Constantinople concerning his quarrel with Maurice. But in order to curry favor with the emperor, Magnus changed sides and let it be known that he would be willing to bring Muḏīr in chains to Constantinople, if Tiberius gave him the command. Magnus held many important appointments. He had been *comes sacrarum largitionum*, *curator domus divinae rerum Marinae*, *commerciarius* of Antioch 573 to 578, and *curator domus divinae rerum Hormisdae* in 581. It was during his incumbency of the last two offices when he was in Antioch that Muḏīr the Ghassānid knew him in the 570s and befriended him. Moreover, he was, according to John of Ephesus, born in Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria) in Phoenicia Libanensis, and so was a native of Oriens where the Ghassānids were stationed. The Ghassānid king and the Byzantine *curator* must have been in touch with each other, since, together with the *magister militum* and the patriarch of Antioch, they were the four most important and influential persons in Oriens.

It is therefore natural that Muḏīr should have employed the services of one of Magnus' description to represent him at the court in Constantinople before Tiberius. He was a public servant who, because of his duties as *curator* and *commerciarius*, would have appreciated the importance of peace for Oriens, which was partly due to the strong military presence of the Ghassānids and the military prestige of the Ghassānid king. Muḏīr, then, thought he could depend upon him.

The two terms used by John of Ephesus to describe the relationship between Muḏīr and Magnus are Latin *patronus* in its Greek form *πάτρων*, meaning "defender, advocate" in Syriac, and Greek *ἀπόκρισις*, which could mean "response" or "defense."<sup>182</sup> It is clear that there was an accusation leveled

<sup>180</sup> See D. Feissel, "Magnus, Mégas et les curateurs des 'maisons divines' de Justin II à Maurice," *TM* 9 (1985), 465–76, esp. 465–68; and N. Oikonomides, "Silk Trade and Production in Byzantium from the Sixth to the Ninth Century: The Seals of the *Kommerkiarioi*," *DOP* 40 (1986), 33–53, esp. p. 37 on Magnus as a *commerciarius*.

<sup>181</sup> In the Latin version of John of Ephesus, the entire account of the conspiracy occupies pp. 129–31; in the Syriac version, pp. 174–76. All the data on the conspiracy and the arrest in this chapter may be found in these pages of the *HE*.

<sup>182</sup> For the Syriac version of these two terms, see *HE*, textus, p. 174, lines 16, 17. The Latin version renders the sentence in which the two terms occur: "quoniam amicus eius fuit et patronus, et ei confidebat, eum procuratorem eius apud regem esse arbitratus"; *HE*, p. 129,

against Mundir, a κατηγορία, probably the *prodosia*; hence there was a summons, *evocatio*, issued for him to answer these charges. Mundir chose to employ Magnus as his advocate (*patronus*) to represent him in Constantinople and present his defense. This is clearly revealed when Magnus, before arresting him in Ḥuwwārīn, tells him "you have been accused and you must go up yourself and speak in your own defense and clear yourself of these charges." Magnus was not a lawyer but clearly acted in this capacity in representing Mundir in this dispute and was expected to present his case before Tiberius. Mundir could not have chosen a more appropriate and influential person.

Magnus, however, betrayed him, and the preceding section has explored the various possibilities that might explain his defection and betrayal of the Ghassānid king. Opportunism and self-promotion were probably the most potent. It should also be remembered that Magnus' position as *curator* of the house of Hormisdas and as *commercarius* assigned him to Antioch, which was also the headquarters of the *magister militum* Maurice and the see of Patriarch Gregory, the two inveterate enemies of Mundir. So he was moving in circles unfriendly to Mundir and must have thought that his best interests lay in going along with the anti-Monophysite and anti-Ghassānid sentiment in both Antioch and Constantinople, especially as he too must have belonged to the Chalcedonian, anti-Monophysite establishment.

Finally, it may be noted that only the emperor, not the *magister militum* of Oriens, could give the order to arrest Mundir. This reflects the power and prestige that the Ghassānid king had attained, especially after his visit to Constantinople in 580 and his coronation by Tiberius.

For the implementation of the conspiracy plan, Magnus traveled back to Oriens by the state post (*veredi*). He went to his town, Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria), which he had made a city and encircled with a wall, and where he had also built a church. He made the dedication of the church the pretext for his visit. Patriarch Gregory was also to be there for the dedication so that Magnus might better deceive Mundir and prevail upon him to come thither. From Ḥuwwārīn he sent a message to Mundir inviting him to come for the dedication ceremony, saying that had it not been for the rigors of the journey that had fatigued him, he would have come himself to pay his respects to Mundir. He then asked him to come soon and not bring a large army with him since he would like him to spend several days in the city and bringing an army for that length of time would entail great expense.

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line 33–p. 130, line 1; in a footnote the translator adds: "Litt. ἀποκρίσεις eius ap. regem facere," p. 130 note 1. Thus it is possible to reconstruct the legal proceedings involved from an examination of the Greek and Latin terms, naturalized in Syriac and employed by John of Ephesus.

John of Ephesus is informative on Ḥuwwārīn, Magnus' native town.<sup>183</sup> What Magnus did for Ḥuwwārīn is controversial, but what is relevant to this discussion is the choice of this city for the success of the plot against Muṇḍir.<sup>184</sup> The city was situated between Palmyra and Damascus in Phoenicia Libanensis, a region closer to the Ghassānid headquarters in Arabia than a town near Antioch which would have made Muṇḍir suspicious. It was located in the arid zone of Oriens, well known to the Arabs and the Ghassānids. The Arab element in it must have been strong. With Salamias and Barcusa, it probably belonged to the eastern *clima* and was detached from the jurisdiction of Palmyra on its destruction by Aurelian. Ruṣāfa and Evaria had certainly been Palmyrene villages.<sup>185</sup>

Most important, there was also a strong federate presence there. Among the bishops exiled by Justin I in 519 there was one John, bishop of the Arabs in Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria). It is not entirely clear whether these Arabs were Ghassānids or belonged to some other Arab federate group such as the Salīhids or the Tanūkhids.<sup>186</sup> But the federate presence in Evaria helps to explain how easy it was to lure Muṇḍir to come there for a visit.

The skill with which Magnus prepared for Muṇḍir's entrapment was thus remarkable.<sup>187</sup> To the choice of Ḥuwwārīn may be added that Magnus was aware of Muṇḍir's zeal for Christianity. The invitation to come to the city for the dedication of the church would have appealed to the Ghassānid, especially as the patriarch of Oriens himself was there for the occasion and Muṇḍir had met him the year before on his return from Constantinople. Furthermore, the letter to Muṇḍir was written in such a way as to leave him no choice but to accept. There was the expression of extreme friendliness and the flattering sentiment that Magnus, the *curator*, would come to pay his respects<sup>188</sup> to the

<sup>183</sup> For the exchange between Nöldeke and Stein on what Magnus actually did or did not do for Ḥuwwārīn/Evaria, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 28 note 3, and Stein, *Studien*, 101 note 5. John of Ephesus may not have been very accurate on Magnus, but he is probably right in general that the powerful, wealthy, and influential Magnus did something for his native town. Furthermore, he had become *comes sacrarum largitionum* (566–573), and in this capacity he could have used funds for construction work in Evaria.

The church that was to be dedicated in Ḥuwwārīn has been identified by R. Mouterde as "la basilique à pilier," for which see "Inscriptions grecques de Souweida et de 'Āhiré," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph, Beyrouth* 16 (1932), 112–15; the arrest of Muṇḍir is erroneously dated to 573, *ibid.*, 115.

<sup>184</sup> There is no doubt that Ḥuwwārīn/Evaria was the site of the plot, not Emesa, as stated in the *Chronicon Anonymum* . . . 1234, 165–66. Emesa is rightly rejected by Feissel, "Magnus," 467 note 14.

<sup>185</sup> Jones, *Cities*, 268.

<sup>186</sup> On John, bishop of the Arabs of Evaria, see *BASIC* I.2, 717–22.

<sup>187</sup> The failure of the first plot against Muṇḍir in 572/73, in which the *magister militum* Marcianus was involved, must have made Magnus prepare this second plot with such circumspection that even the wary Muṇḍir was outwitted.

<sup>188</sup> The Syriac verb employed, *sged*, is even stronger as it expresses doing obeisance before



Arab federate king, if he had not been fatigued by the journey. Furthermore, he speaks of spending several days with him in order that they might enjoy each other's company. He makes the invitation inexpensive<sup>189</sup> for Mundir by asking him to come with a small escort rather than his large army. Attractive as all these were, there is no doubt that Mundir was more than inclined to go to Evaria to see Magnus for reasons of his own. He had employed his services as his *patronus* (advocate) to plead his case before Tiberius in Constantinople, and so he must have been very anxious to hear the result. It was, therefore, natural that the normally wary Mundir should have found the invitation irresistible.

That Magnus brought Patriarch Gregory with him suggests that on his way back from Constantinople he stopped in Antioch. The patriarch was obviously privy to the plot which the two must have discussed together. Thus the patriarch of Oriens conspired against the Arab king whom he and Magnus planned to trap at the dedication of the church—all of which smacks of sacrilege. The patriarch travels in full knowledge that he is on a journey to entrap the Arab king, evidence of ecclesiastical duplicity, but the patriarch was to be accused later of much more serious depravity.<sup>190</sup>

#### The Betrayal

Mundir's betrayal by Magnus should be told in John of Ephesus' own words:

On receiving this missive, Mondir was greatly pleased; and having the fullest confidence in Magnus, as his dear friend, he set out immediately without delay, attended by a very small escort, not having the slightest suspicion that any danger could befall him at his hands. And Magnus, anxious to conceal his wicked schemes, received him with a show of friendship, and gave orders for a great banquet to be prepared. He then said, 'Send away these people who have come with you.' But he replied, 'I have come, as you requested me, with but a small escort; but on my return, I cannot travel without having an armed force with me, even if it be but a small one.' But he pressed the point, and said, 'Send them away; and when you return, you can send for them, and they will come for you.' And as Mondir was a man of considerable experience, the matter did not please him, and he began to be suspicious, and sent orders to his escort to remove but a slight distance from him, and await his com-

him. See *HE*, textus, p. 174, line 28; *HE*, versio, p. 130, lines 10–11, has "salute": "et . . . te salutassem."

<sup>189</sup> The implication of the statement is that the Ghassānid federate king paid the expenses for the movement of his troops, presumably from the *annona* he used to receive.

<sup>190</sup> See Evagrius, *HE*, Book VI, chap. 7.



ing. On their dismissal, Magnus gave directions to the troops whom he had secretly with him, to hold themselves in readiness, and the general he commanded to remain in his company. And when evening arrived, he said to Mondir, 'My lord Patrician, you have been accused before the king, and he has given orders for you to go to the capital, and make your defence there, and prove to him that nothing that is said against you is true.' But Mondir replied, 'After all the services which I have rendered the king, I do not think it right that accusations should be listened to against me. For I am one of the king's vassals, nor do I refuse to go and appear before him: but I cannot possibly at this time break up my army; for if I do, the Arabs, who hold allegiance to the Persians, will come, and take my wives and children prisoners, and carry off all that I have.' But at this moment the Roman troops appeared in arms; and Magnus angrily said to him, 'If you will not go of your own accord, I will throw you into chains, and mount you on an ass, and so send you.' And when now the fraud was plain, and he saw that his friend had stripped him of his escort, and made him a prisoner, and delivered him up to a Roman army to guard him, he was distressed and broken hearted, like a lion of the wilderness shut up in a cage. And when his escort heard what had happened, they surrounded the fort, and prepared to set it on fire: but when the Romans shewed themselves, and made ready for battle, they withdrew; and Mondir, accompanied by a strong guard, was removed from the fort, and arrived in safety at the capital.<sup>191</sup>

The passage in John of Ephesus is eloquent enough, but it deserves the following comments. Mundir's quality as a wary commander reveals itself. Although he was moving in friendly, Byzantine territory, he did not travel without an armed escort. He had been the target of a Byzantine conspiracy before, and his Lakhmid enemies had spies in Oriens to report on him.<sup>192</sup> The Byzantine troops that Magnus assembled must have been those of the *dux* in Phoenicia. Ḥuwwārīn was in Phoenicia, and apparently the *dux* was there with them. What appears as "general" in the English version is Latin *dux* transliterated into Syriac.<sup>193</sup>

The prestige of Mundir in Oriens is reflected in the form of address that Magnus, himself one of the great dignitaries of the empire, employs in speaking to him: "My lord Patrician!"<sup>194</sup> The response of Mundir to Magnus sums

<sup>191</sup> *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, trans. R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1860), 238–39. The translation is adequate, but see the comments below on some technical terms in the Syriac original and two inaccuracies.

<sup>192</sup> On the Lakhmid spies in Ghassānid territories, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>193</sup> For *dux* transliterated in Syriac, see *HE*, textus, p. 175, line 20.

<sup>194</sup> Even the Byzantine *autokrator* addressed his patrician as "my father."

up his defense: loyalty to Byzantium and self-interest<sup>195</sup> make treachery on his part inconceivable. He was expressing his genuine devotion to the Byzantine *autokrator* when he said: "For I am the servant/slave of the king."<sup>196</sup>

Mundir's reference to his *hirthā* (*castra*) is noteworthy.<sup>197</sup> It cannot have been the Ghassānid headquarters in Jābiya in Palaestina Secunda; for it is inconceivable that the Lakhmids could penetrate so deeply into Byzantine territory. This must have been another military camp, their advanced headquarters (*hīra*) in the limitrophe, from which they watched the frontier, especially against possible Lakhmid offensives. This is confirmed by the fact that Mundir had just won another victory over the Lakhmids after his return from the joint expedition with Maurice, and the Lakhmids were thirsting for revenge.<sup>198</sup>

Magnus' reply to Mundir's is expressive of the ill-will that he harbored toward the Ghassānid king: he threatened to put him in chains and mount him on an ass for the journey to Constantinople. Mounting Mundir on an ass must have been particularly insulting to one who was both king and horseman and who used to travel by the state post. The banquet prepared for Mundir when he arrived clearly was not within Ḥuwwārīn but in a fort or camp outside it. This could have been either an audience hall for the *dux* of the province or a fort *extra muros* for defending Evaria against possible raids since it was in desert country in the eastern *clima*.<sup>199</sup>

### Mundir in Constantinople

The last phase of the conspiracy is briefly told by John of Ephesus. Mundir was taken under strong escort to Constantinople where he arrived safely. Tiberius treated him well; he let him stay where he had stayed formerly in Constantinople and assigned him an income for paying his expenses.<sup>200</sup> He allowed him to have with him his wife, two sons, and one daughter, but he was not admitted to an audience with the emperor. The passage in John of Ephesus calls for the following comments.

Although Magnus threatened to mount him on an ass, it is practically

<sup>195</sup> Implied in his saying that the Persian Arabs will attack and carry away his household and belongings.

<sup>196</sup> The English version is inaccurate with its "vassal." In Syriac it is "servant," and the sentence is emphatic; see *HE*, textus, p. 175, line 27. The problem posed by Mundir's references to his "wives/women" in the plural in his reply to Magnus will be treated below, 482–89.

<sup>197</sup> The Syriac original has *hirthā*, that is, "military camp" (*castra*), not "army," as in the English translation; see *HE*, textus, p. 175, line 29.

<sup>198</sup> On the Ghassanid *hīra*, see below, 468.

<sup>199</sup> "Fort," in this context, is Syriac *qastrā*, a loanword transliterating Latin *castra* through Greek; see *HE*, textus, p. 176, line 8. Apparently Stein thought it was Magnus who built it; see Stein, *Studien*, 101 note 5.

<sup>200</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 131, lines 14–20.

certain that Mundir traveled by the state post (*veredi*), judging from the respect shown him while in captivity in Constantinople after his arrival. He could not have been taken immediately to the capital and must have tarried for a short time in Antioch where it was arranged for him to take along members of his family referred to at the end of the passage. He certainly did not have these with him when he went to Evaria for his conference with Magnus.<sup>201</sup>

The treatment accorded Mundir by Tiberius in the capital was remarkable for two features. It was generous: it allowed him to live as a royal personage in the same dwelling he had occupied before, when he had arrived in Constantinople to be crowned, and it provided him with an income to live in a style that befitted a king.<sup>202</sup> It was also humane as the sensitive and gentle Tiberius let him have members of his family with him, instead of leaving him in loneliness without familial company. This is possibly an indication that Tiberius did not really believe in the charges leveled against him and, what is more, that he was embarrassed by this about-face in his attitude to him after he had treated him royally only a year before.

Related to this is the fact that Mundir was not brought to trial in Constantinople and was not asked to make his defense before the emperor himself, as Magnus had told him in Evaria just before he captured him. If there had been any doubts in the mind of Tiberius that Mundir had betrayed the cause of the state, he would have been brought to trial or at least would have been brought before the emperor in order to answer the charge made against him. That nothing of the sort happened indicates that the *prodosia* charge was trumped up and that it carried no conviction with the *autokrator*.<sup>203</sup>

The foregoing analysis raises the question of what exactly Tiberius had in mind when he ordered the arrest of Mundir. Tiberius was no fool and was also a conscientious man. He probably never believed in the charge but wanted to appease the anti-Monophysite and anti-Ghassānid establishment both in the capital and elsewhere by withdrawing Mundir from the scene in Oriens and thus eliminating friction between him and the *magister militum* in that diocese. So he ordered his removal from Oriens but did not send him into exile or treat him badly. In fact, as has been stated, he treated him well and may have wanted him to be kept in royal style in the capital and away from Oriens. He did not realize that soon he would die and Mundir would be dealt with by none other than his inveterate enemy, Maurice, who was elevated to the pur-

<sup>201</sup> Thus the details of the conspiracy were so carefully planned and worked out, including the number of his family members who were to accompany him.

<sup>202</sup> As Stein has pointed out, he was not yet deprived of his royal title as king: *Studien*, 94.

<sup>203</sup> It is also significant that he did not exile him to some remote place to languish in exile, but brought him to the capital itself. It was Maurice, his enemy, who did that later.

ple as his successor. As for Oriens, he thought that peace would prevail with the removal of the controversial Munḍir and the appointment of another Ghassānid, less powerful and more acceptable to the Byzantine authorities in Oriens.

Munḍir's choice of some members of his family to accompany him is noteworthy. It indicated that his confinement in Constantinople was to last for a long time, long enough for him to need some members of his family around him. Not only was his wife allowed to be with him, but also his children, the presence of whom would make his exile in the capital more tolerable. The daughter was included among members of the family, presumably for the sake of her mother. The number of sons was two, and this yields the conclusion that Munḍir had fathered six sons since John of Ephesus mentions that the Ghassānid revolt that immediately broke out was led by four sons of Munḍir who were left in Oriens. It is noteworthy that Nuḥmān, his successor, was not one of those who were allowed to be with Munḍir in Constantinople. Either Munḍir did not want to withdraw him from the scene in Oriens since he was his successor on whom he depended, or the Romans already knew of him and had high hopes of appointing him to succeed Munḍir, as they in fact tried a little later.

Munḍir languished under some form of comfortable "house arrest" in Constantinople for a few months, until the death of Tiberius in August 582 and the accession of Maurice, when he was exiled to Sicily. How he spent these months in Constantinople is not clear. The relevant chapter in John of Ephesus describing his imprisonment before his exile has not survived; only its title has.<sup>204</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that while in the capital he met John of Ephesus, the most distinguished Monophysite there and, what is more, one who enjoyed royal favor; perhaps he even attended church services celebrated according to the Monophysite rite by John himself. And it was probably during these few precious months that John of Ephesus derived most of his information on the reign of Munḍir and indeed on the history of the Ghassānid dynasty in its entirety.<sup>205</sup> If so, a new dimension is imparted to the personality of the Ghassānid who so far has been studied as a soldier in the military annals of Byzantium and as a protector of Monophysitism in the ecclesiastical history of the period. He could emerge now as the primary source for the history of the Ghassānid dynasty in the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus for whom he might have been the chief informant.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>204</sup> See John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 88, lines 1–2.

<sup>205</sup> On this, see below, 583–92.

<sup>206</sup> This situation parallels that of Terebon II and Cyril of Scythopolis. Terebon informed Cyril on the history of his house, the phylarchs of the Palestinian Parembolē; see *BAFIC*, 207.

## XI. THE GHASSĀNID REVOLT: NU' MĀN

If Tiberius thought that arresting Mundir would put an end to the discord in Oriens between the *magister militum* Maurice and the federate king, he was sadly mistaken. Family ties among the Ghassānids were stronger than any self-interest that a possible successor to Mundir, appointed by Byzantium, might nurse. His family rallied to avenge the arrest of its chief, and the result was a furious revolt that shook Oriens and ruffled the course of Arab-Byzantine relations for years to come. The standard of revolt was carried by Mundir's son Nu'mān. Accounts of the revolt during what remained of Tiberius' reign were written by John of Ephesus in a detailed chapter, as was the subsequent course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations for the first two years of Maurice's reign. But what took place during the latter's reign has been preserved only in the title of the chapter that John of Ephesus wrote. The account, however, was available to Michael the Syrian, who made a short résumé of what happened, while Evagrius supplies some important details on the exile of Nu'mān.

The description of the Ghassānid revolt is preserved in Book III, chapter 42 of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus.<sup>207</sup> It is a most precious account, rich in details that throw more light on the Ghassānid military establishment and its relation to the imperial one in Oriens.

## A

Mundir left behind him in Oriens four sons, the eldest of whom was Nu'mān, described by John of Ephesus as a man possessed of even greater intelligence<sup>208</sup> and more warlike spirit than his father. Nu'mān gathered together his brothers and fell upon Magnus' *castra* (while the latter was in Constantinople), where they killed, took captives, and burned. What was not destroyed by their sword or by fire they took with them: gold and silver, brass and iron, garments of wool and cotton; corn, wine, and oil; troops of baggage animals of all sorts, herds of oxen, and flocks of sheep and goats.

The description of Nu'mān is noteworthy. To have surpassed even his heroic father, he must have been a truly exceptional man.<sup>209</sup> Most probably John of Ephesus spoke from experience. He is likely to have met him in 580

<sup>207</sup> See *HE*, 131–32.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131, line 24, where Brooks translates the Syriac term as *ferocior* but in note 5b suggests also *astutior*. His reason for preferring *ferocior* is not convincing. *Ferocior* makes the sentence rather tautological, with warlike coming after it as an epithet for Nu'mān.

<sup>209</sup> The Ghassānids produced one remarkable king after another. The line extends from Jabala, through Arethas, through Mundir, and reaches Nu'mān, testifying to the mysteries of heredity. With Nu'mān, Byzantium had at its disposal another redoubtable chief who could have carried to even greater efficiency the Ghassānid military machine, an asset to Byzantium in its war with Persia. If Nu'mān had been allowed to develop it for twenty-five years, perhaps even the Persian offensive during the reign of Heraclius may have been stemmed.

when he might have accompanied his father on the latter's visit to the capital and also later when he came to Constantinople where he, too, languished in captivity. His record and his later dealings with Maurice justify John of Ephesus' description of him.

The first phase in the Ghassānid retaliation involved Magnus' *castra*, and this is significant. The historian uses the Latin term rather than the Arabic Semitic *ḥīra*, since this was not a federate establishment but a Roman imperial one—the military facility of a camp outside the walls of Evaria. Stein thought it was built by Magnus,<sup>210</sup> although the context does not justify that conclusion; in the narrative it is simply associated with Magnus who there entertained Munḍir *extra muros*, and the choice of the *castra* for the rendezvous was natural. The Ghassānids must have thought that their father was still there, since immediately after he was betrayed, they assembled quickly in an effort to set him free.<sup>211</sup>

They thus vented their anger in this extraordinary way. These were disciplined federate troops to whom such behavior was out of character, and what they did must have been a reflection of their deep sense of betrayal. In his account of the later attacks, the historian goes out of his way to say that they avoided killing and burning, and so this must have been the exception. Presumably they were met by force when they attacked the *castra*, and not finding their father there, they burned the whole establishment, riding the crest of an emotional wave caused by their father's capture.

The list of what they carried away is informative and also noteworthy. They probably needed these items in order to subsist outside the *limes* whither they retired during the revolt. The long list of items they carried away also suggests a mood of revenge.<sup>212</sup> The narrative of John of Ephesus could lead one to think that this was taken from the fort, which is quite unlikely. The *castra* was near Evaria, and Evaria was in Phoenicia Libanensis. The presumption, then, is that the first Ghassānid offensive was directed against Phoenicia Libanensis, where there was a strong phylarchal presence,<sup>213</sup> reflected in the novel on Phoenicia in 536. This conclusion is fortified by the fact that John of

<sup>210</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 101 note 5.

<sup>211</sup> According to John of Ephesus, Magnus had by then departed to Constantinople, taking Munḍir with him (*HE*, p. 131, lines 14–16). But this was not known to the Ghassānids, who attacked, hoping that their father would still be there.

<sup>212</sup> Whether the *annona* that the Ghassānids received (see below, 628) was in cash or in kind is not entirely clear. The list of things they carried away could suggest that some of the items may have been received from Byzantium as *annona*. On the *annona* in cash, see above, 219 note 57.

<sup>213</sup> See above, 172–73. Furthermore, this is confirmed by Evagrius who specifically says that they ravaged the two Phoenicias and the Palestines, at least two of them, presumably Palaestina Secunda and Tertia; see Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI.2, p. 223, lines 25–26. Nicephorus Callistus follows Evagrius and so, as a derivative source, adds nothing; *HE*, PG 147, col. 348. In Book XVIII, chap. 11, Nicephorus speaks of the two Palestines rather than the three.



Ephesus, in describing the second phase of the Ghassānid offensive, says that it was directed against the two provinces of Syria and Arabia. It does not make sense to say that from a diminutive fort or *castra*, such as the one outside the walls of Evaria, the Ghassānids attacked the two large provinces of Arabia and Syria. So John of Ephesus was speaking loosely of the *castra* and meant the province wherein the *castra* of Magnus was located.

## B

The Ghassānid army then overran and plundered the towns and districts of the two provinces of Arabia and Syria<sup>214</sup> and thus gathered immense booty. Having done that, they retreated into the "inner desert," where they pitched their great *hirthā* and divided the spoils but remained vigilant and in a state of preparedness and watchful on all sides. From their camps in the desert, they sallied out and plundered again, then they withdrew into the desert. Consequently the whole region of Oriens, from the desert to the shores of the Mediterranean, was in terror because of them. Its inhabitants fled into the cities and would not dare to show themselves before them.

In speaking of the Ghassānids, John of Ephesus does not speak of hordes or bands of raiders, as some Byzantine writers do when they speak of the Saracens; he uses the term "Ghassānid army,"<sup>215</sup> the correct term to use. This was the army that was the federate contingent in the army of the Orient and is described thus by Procopius and the Arab poets. Overrunning the two provinces was not an easy task, but of course there was a strong Ghassānid phylarchal and federate presence in Arabia and Syria.<sup>216</sup> Also, the Ghassānids were thoroughly familiar with the geography of the region, having been associated with it for roughly a century in the service of Byzantium. It is the region they had defended, and now in their rage they turned against it.

Important in the account is the description of the tactics of the Ghassānids in their war against Byzantium. Now that they were in open revolt, they could not conduct their war from Roman territory. So they withdrew into the desert, the Arabian desert, whence they had hewn their way before making the Byzantine connection. They could be safe there in a region where the Byzantine army could not reach them, and from there they could make their sallies and plunder Oriens. Where exactly they pitched their military encampment is not clear, but it is practically certain that it must have been the same region in which their father, Muḍīr, had pitched it when he fell

<sup>214</sup> Evagrius is thus informative as he adds the Palestines, and specifically refers to the two Phoenicias, in addition to Arabia and Syria, mentioned by John of Ephesus. This means that the revolt spread from the Euphrates to the Gulf of Eilat.

<sup>215</sup> See *HE*, p. 131, line 32, where he speaks of "*exercitus Ṭayāyê*."

<sup>216</sup> And of course in Phoenicia and the Palestines, at least the two of them, Secunda and Tertia.

out with Byzantium in the early 570s and whither he retired for some two or three years.<sup>217</sup> The Ghassānids, now wary of Byzantium after the first experience of Mundir with Byzantine treachery, would have kept their desert connection there, just in case, and the betrayal of Mundir now in 581 confirmed their suspicions. Perhaps most interesting is the use by John of Ephesus of the term "inner desert," Syriac *madbrā gōyā*,<sup>218</sup> important for the controversy over the meaning of the relational terms *limes interior* and *limes exterior*.<sup>219</sup>

John of Ephesus was probably not exaggerating when he said the whole region of Oriens from the desert to the Mediterranean was terrorized by the Ghassānids. The entire Ghassānid limitrophe from the Euphrates to the Red Sea was obviously in revolt. For the last decade the Ghassānids proved to be an invincible contingent in the army of Oriens, winning victories on the eastern front, especially against the Lakhmids. Now all its efficiency was turned against Oriens, the region it had protected and to whose defense it had been committed. Hence the regular Byzantine army in Oriens was no match for the Ghassānids, especially because of the tactics used by the latter, the same tactics used by the pastoralists of Arabia against whom the Roman army was helpless and for whose containment Byzantium had developed and perfected the system of *foederati*—Saracens allied to the empire in order to fight their own congeners. The last sentence in the account speaks of the inhabitants of Oriens fleeing to their cities to escape the ravages of the Ghassānids. This sounds correct. The inhabitants flee to walled cities, and the Ghassānids do not besiege these. They are interested in carrying away booty, especially after the *annona* was cut off.

## C

The authorities in the region, both civil and military, sent to them asking for an explanation of what they had inflicted on the region; the Ghassānids sent back their answer, that the Byzantine king had sent their father into exile after his labors, victories, and heroic deeds for the empire; furthermore, the king had cut off the *annona* and thus deprived them of their livelihood. They concluded by saying that these were the reasons for the revolt and that the Romans should consider themselves lucky since the Ghassānids had spared them killing and burning.

It is clear from the tone of the response that John of Ephesus received this information from a Ghassānid source, or a source with Ghassānid sympathies, possibly from Nu'mān himself when he, too, was imprisoned by Mau-

<sup>217</sup> See above, 356–64.

<sup>218</sup> For the Syriac term, see *HE*, textus, p. 177, line 1; for the Latin "desertus interior," see *HE*, p. 132, line 2.

<sup>219</sup> On this, see above, 150–51.

rice in the capital. When the Byzantine *basileus* and federate *basileus* are referred to in one sentence, the title *basileus* naturally is applied to the Byzantine, and not the federate, ruler. Thus the Ghassānids refer only to Tiberius as the *basileus* who exiled Muṅḍir; the latter is referred to emotionally as "our father,"<sup>220</sup> which reflects the point of the revolt—the strong feeling of solidarity and loyalty that inspired the Ghassānid house.

The reference to the subsidies that the Ghassānids received from Byzantium is precious. These are referred to by the technical term transliterated in Syriac, *annona*, used in the plural, *annonas*.<sup>221</sup> This is a rare explicit reference to the fact that the Ghassānid *foederati* used to receive the *annona* from Byzantium for their services to the state. It is not clear whether they received it in cash or in kind. The list of items seized by the Ghassānids in their revolt and enumerated earlier could suggest payment in kind. They were cut off from the *annona* and so had to acquire the items by force in order not to starve. This explicit statement on the part of the Ghassānids themselves, concerning the financial aspect of the *foedus*, is a valuable element in answering charges of *prodosia* leveled against them. They were entirely dependent on the *annona* they received, and they were happy with this arrangement. It is inconceivable that they would have acted treacherously against the state on which their very existence depended.

The final statement in the account confirms that the Ghassānids avoided killing and burning during their revolt, except in the exceptional case when they were forced to. As has been indicated earlier, they killed and burned at the *castra* of Magnus, outside the walls of Evaria, because of their outrage at the capture of their father. But they avoided doing that in principle: they were loyal Byzantine federates whose assignment had been to protect the Roman frontier and Oriens in general, and they had done so for about a century. Thus when they killed and burned at the *castra extra muros*, they did so with much distaste, because they were forced to and were driven to despair by the action of the central government.<sup>222</sup> They were soon to repeat these actions before Bostra.

## D

The final phase of the revolt was its climax. At last, after their victories, the Ghassānids went against Bostra itself and besieged it. They wanted their

<sup>220</sup> For this collocation of *basileus* and "father" in one and the same sentence, referring to Tiberius and Muṅḍir respectively, see *HE*, p. 132, line 10.

<sup>221</sup> And so transliterated into Syriac: see *HE*, textus, p. 177, line 12. For a possible translation of this term into Syriac, and in a Ghassānid context, see the present writer in *Martyrs*, p. xxx, line 21; p. 53, line 2; pp. 101–3.

<sup>222</sup> Bar-Hebraeus adds the perceptive remark that they refrained from killing and burning because their father was a prisoner and they thus feared for his life; see *The Chronography*, trans. E. A. W. Budge (Oxford, 1932), 82.

father's armor and his other royal belongings, which they had deposited there. They threatened to kill and burn everything in Bostra and its region if these were not delivered to them. When the *dux*, a man of note, heard their request, he was angry, and, collecting his forces, he sallied out against them, looking down on them as Saracens. But they drew up in the order of battle, overpowered him, and killed him and many of his men. Terrified at this spectacle, the Bostrans begged the Ghassānids to desist from pillage, to stop the carnage, and take away what belonged to their father. This they brought out from the city and gave to them, and the Ghassānids departed to their camp (*ḥirthā*), to the desert. And for a long time they continued to plunder the region.

The account makes clear that the Ghassānids had a well-defined objective in marching on Bostra—the recovery of the armor of their father and also what John of Ephesus calls *ʿbīdīā dʿmalkūtheb*, the symbols of kingship.<sup>223</sup> As Stein already understood, the latter must have been the *insignia* of kingship that belonged to Munḍir. Stein had argued that the Romans transferred these to Bostra after they captured Munḍir at Ḥuwwārīn.<sup>224</sup> This is possible, but as for armor, it is difficult to believe that this, too, was transferred there by the Romans. Munḍir came to Magnus' *castra* with a few of his followers after Magnus lured him and persuaded him to come without a large army, and actually asked him to send away the few he had with him. It could follow from this that the armor was left there by Munḍir himself. Perhaps the Ghassānids, after the development of harmonious relations with the Byzantines, could leave their heavy armor there and then retrieve it when they were called upon for a serious campaign as a contingent in the army of the Orient. Also, Arabia was their provincial headquarters and Bostra was its capital, and so the chief Ghassānid phylarch coordinated in military matters, including arms, with the *dux* of Arabia in Bostra.

The Ghassānids at the time had been squeezed out of Oriens and were living in a camp outside the *limes*. Their march on Bostra for the purpose of recovering their father's armor and *insignia* of royalty poses the question of why they found it necessary to do so. They probably needed the armor for which they had depended on Byzantium, a source now cut off. As a military group, they could not subsist without it. But the *insignia* may have been even more important. The Byzantines had kidnapped their father and king, his person, but the *insignia* remained in Bostra. They wanted to acquire it, perhaps as a kind of compensation for what the Byzantines had done to their

<sup>223</sup> For the Syriac expression, see *HE*, textus, p. 177, lines 16–17; for the Latin, see *HE*, versio, "apparatus regius," p. 132, line 16. This is probably to be equated with the "dashnē d' malkūthā" used by John of Ephesus of the regal presents given to Munḍir by Tiberius in 580 when he visited Constantinople; see above, 401.

<sup>224</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 94.

father; more importantly, they may have wanted the *insignia* for the legitimization of their claim to be the true rulers of the Ghassānids and the federates of Byzantium. When it is remembered that Byzantium was soon to send Magnus to enthrone a Ghassānid prince in place of Mundir—one who was not a Monophysite but a Chalcedonian—the Ghassānid desire to acquire the *insignia* becomes perhaps more intelligible.

Bostra was certainly not the capital of the Ghassānids,<sup>225</sup> as Stein thought, but they did have some close connections with it.<sup>226</sup> Bostra was an Arab foundation and retained its Arab character even after the annexation of Nabataea by the Romans in A.D. 106 and after its inhabitants became *Rhomaioi* in 212. Bostra was the capital of the Provincia Arabia, which was the headquarters of the Ghassānid dynasty. Thus the Ghassānid king and supreme phylarch was an important military and political figure in the Provincia. Mundir, who was a factor in the religious history of the period, would have been a well-known and welcome personality among the Arabs of Bostra. It is therefore not impossible to think that the Ghassānid king had a residence there in which he stayed when he visited the city. Furthermore, he could have had a magazine for his armor in Bostra and a depository for his *insignia* which he would use when he met Byzantine officials of Bostra, the capital of the province to which he was allocated.

The Ghassānids suddenly appeared at the gates of Bostra after their revolt and withdrawal to the desert outside the *limes*. To have marched this long distance and to have succeeded in appearing before Bostra without their being noticed suggests that this was a lightning campaign, such as the mobile Ghassānids were used to and which they perfected. They must have been encouraged by their recent successes against the Roman troops in Oriens in the three provinces of Phoenicia, Syria, and Arabia, which they had pillaged. Above all, this was their province par excellence, and so they knew its topography and road system very well.

The great advances made by the Ghassānids in lightning pitched battles are nowhere better demonstrated than in their campaign against Bostra. After a hundred years or so of association with Byzantium and its military establishment, the Ghassānids were now experts in fighting in the Roman manner with a disciplined army. It is interesting that they first laid siege to Bostra, a military operation at which the Arabs normally were not good, as noted by Procopius.<sup>227</sup> But having participated in the campaigns of the army of the Orient against the Persians, they must now have acquired the necessary expertise for siegecraft.

<sup>225</sup> See F. Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens* (Paris, 1933), 93.

<sup>226</sup> For more on these connections, see BASIC II.

<sup>227</sup> *History*, II.xix.12.

Not only in laying siege to Bostra, but also in the ensuing battle for it, did the Ghassānids prove that they were worthy students of the military machine that had trained them. When the Roman *dux* challenged them, they formed their battle array, in the Roman manner, and beat him. This was an unusual spectacle and is eloquent testimony to the progress the Arabs had made in their military techniques since the year 500 when the *dux* of Palestine defeated not only the Ghassānid Jabala, the greatgrandfather of Nuʿmān, but also the forces of their Kindite allies.<sup>228</sup> The battle of Bostra was no doubt directed by Nuʿmān, who was the spirit of the Ghassānid revolt and also the directing brain, the two qualities ascribed to him by John of Ephesus.

Note, too, that John of Ephesus states that the *dux* was angered by the Ghassānid demands and immediately went out and gave battle, despising them as Saracens. This sounds strange coming from a *dux* of Arabia, who must have been aware of the prowess of the Ghassānids, especially in the decade of victories scored by Mundir. This could lead to the conclusion that the *dux* was recently appointed to Arabia and was unfamiliar with the military competence of the Ghassānids. The identity of the *dux* is unknown, as John of Ephesus unfortunately does not mention his name. It has been suggested that he might have been Flavius Paulus.<sup>229</sup> The name could imply that he was ethnically a Roman, possible a newcomer to Oriens, and this might explain his contemptuous attitude to the Ghassānids before the battle, which carried the negative stereotype that the Romans had of all "barbarians," including the Arabs.

## XII. THE BYZANTINE RESPONSE TO THE GHASSĀNID REVOLT

Byzantium certainly expected some reaction from the Ghassānids after the betrayal and arrest of their distinguished leader. But it did not expect that the federate army would invest Bostra, the capital of Arabia, defeat the regular Byzantine army in Arabia, and leave its *dux* dead on the battlefield outside the walls of Bostra. This sharp reverse experienced by the imperial forces enraged Tiberius and aroused him to take drastic action. John of Ephesus wrote an account of this reaction in a chapter entirely devoted to it,<sup>230</sup> but only a few opening sentences are extant, which may be retold as follows: "When Emperor Tiberius heard about the doings of the sons of Mundir, he was very irritated, and he sent Magnus again in order that he might install a brother of Mundir as king instead of the latter over the Arabs, and if possible to seize the sons of

<sup>228</sup> See *BAFIC*, 125–31. The successes of the Ghassānid Arabs in these campaigns recall those of Queen Mavia and her Arab *foederati* in the 4th century, when the Arab queen mounted an offensive against Oriens from the Euphrates to the Red Sea and actually beat the Roman commander in a pitched battle; see *BAFIC*, 142–52.

<sup>229</sup> See Sartre, *TE*, 112.

<sup>230</sup> Chapter 43 of Book III, *HE*, pp. 132–33.



Munḍir whether by fraud, blandishments, flattery, or war. And orders were sent to the judges of the cities and to the *duces* to accompany him with a greater army. In this way Magnus went down with great pomp. And first of all he did make Munḍir's brother king, but he died twenty days after. And finally the tribes . . . fraudulently . . .”

The loss of some ten folios after the last sentence is very regrettable since these would have provided invaluable information on Ghassānid-Byzantine relations during the short period that Magnus was in charge. But the surviving fragment is good enough and may be analyzed as follows: The astounding Ghassānid victory at Bostra sealed the fate of Munḍir in the capital<sup>231</sup> and let Ghassānid-Byzantine relations deteriorate further. Had it not been for this victory, it is conceivable that the gentle and honest Tiberius might have reconsidered his treatment of Munḍir and reached some form of *modus vivendi* with the Ghassānids, but the death of the duke dashed all such possibilities to the ground and entailed the violent reaction of the central government.

The dispatch of Magnus, the Ghassānid specialist, to deal with the new and dangerous situation was natural, and it is just possible that Magnus may himself have been behind these measures, just as he had been directing the conspiracy to arrest Munḍir. He had commanded an army in the early 570s when he was beaten by the Persian Adraamanes (Adarmahan).<sup>232</sup> It is noteworthy that his main assignment this time was the enthronement of a Ghassānid acceptable to Byzantium, the brother of Munḍir. This was the view from Constantinople, the Byzantine solution of the Ghassānid problem. The lost folios in the manuscript of John of Ephesus would have supplied answers to our questions concerning this brother, which can now only be answered tentatively.

The name of the brother is not given. What is important is that he was Munḍir's brother, not his son. The sons were so devoted to the memory of their father that it was impossible to negotiate with them; but the brother felt the force of familial ties less strongly. It is not clear whether he was already in Constantinople, and thus accompanied Magnus, or whether he was in Oriens. It is more than likely that this brother who was acceptable to Byzantium was not a Monophysite but a Chalcedonian. Earlier in the century, probably during the reign of Arethas, there is reference to some of his sons, Munḍir's brothers, being not of the strict Monophysite persuasion but of another, and in this period it could only have been Chalcedonian.<sup>233</sup> These sons of Arethas must have felt that Monophysitism was hurting their relations with the cen-

<sup>231</sup> As rightly observed by Stein, *Studien*, 95.

<sup>232</sup> On this, see above, 446.

<sup>233</sup> See *Codex Syriacus*, BASIC I.2, 845–50.

tral government.<sup>234</sup> Knowledge of the doctrinal persuasion of these members of the Ghassānid dynasty must have reached Constantinople, which had precise information on the various members of the family. The choice of a Chalcedonian Ghassānid prince to head the phylarchate after the deposition of Munḍir would reflect the fact that it was the doctrinal problem that was the main issue in the Ghassānid-Byzantine conflict, and that the enemies mounting the offensive against the Ghassānids were theologians, at whose head was Eutychius, the patriarch of Constantinople and inveterate enemy of the Monophysites.

It is clearly inferable from the course of these events that Tiberius formally declared Munḍir deposed as the king of the Ghassānids and that the Ghassānid *Basileia* was to have a new incumbent soon.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, this could only be done through the *basileus* in Constantinople, who was the kingmaker. Two years before he had crowned Munḍir; now he dethroned him and made another Ghassānid the king.<sup>236</sup> It is the emperor who makes and un-makes the federate kings of the empire. And the case of this brother of Munḍir is the third one in which Tiberius actually, and explicitly in the sources, appears as a Ghassānid kingmaker. Perhaps the sons of Munḍir suspected such an action on the part of Tiberius and consequently hastened to recover the *insignia* of Ghassānid royalty from Bostra, as the document for the legitimacy of Munḍir and the illegitimacy of any other Ghassānid whom Tiberius might choose to elect instead of their father.

The other assignment of Magnus was the arrest of the four sons of Munḍir. These were of course outlaws from the point of view of the central government, since they had revolted, attacked Roman territory, besieged Bostra, and killed its duke. But Tiberius' desire to have the sons arrested also clearly shows that he wanted to get rid of the immediate family of Munḍir—staunch Monophysites that they were—and start a new line within the Ghassānid royal dynasty that was not tainted with heresy and not loyal to the old king.

<sup>234</sup> Furthermore, their own patriarch of Antioch, Paul the Black, with his oscillation between Monophysitism and Chalcedonianism, may have induced by his example some princes of the Ghassānid royal house to incline toward the latter doctrinal persuasion. On Paul the Black, see *ibid.*, 865–69.

<sup>235</sup> Another confirmation that the *foedus* which Rome/Byzantium struck with her allies was always a *foedus iniquum*.

<sup>236</sup> The idiom of John of Ephesus is clear that the Byzantine ruler was making kings among his *foederati*. That he made the brother a new king is stated in no ambiguous terms by John of Ephesus (*HE*, p. 132, lines 32–33), another datum to be added to the controversy around the title *basileus* applied to the Byzantine ruler; see above, 114–17. For king-making by Tiberius in this connection, mentioned twice by John of Ephesus, see *HE*, versio, p. 132, line 33; p. 133, lines 2–3. For the Syriac with the term *malkā*, see *ibid.*, *textus*, p. 178, line 2; p. 178, lines 7–8.

This assignment is also the background of the later encounter of Nu'mān, the eldest son, with Magnus.

To insure the successful implementation of his plan to put another Ghassānid on the throne, Tiberius ordered a large army<sup>237</sup> to support Magnus' efforts. This was clearly in response to the bitter lesson learned from the battle of Bostra when the Ghassānid federate contingent beat the regular Roman army because it was that of a single province, Arabia, and not adequate to meet the Ghassānid military threat. Now the central government mobilized a much larger army in order to make sure that the Ghassānids would have no chance in the event of a battle. Apparently none took place; there is no reference to any military engagement. It is natural to assume that this army was not provincial but diocesan, consisting of many provincial armies in Oriens.

Noteworthy in the passage is that Tiberius ordered not only the military *duces* but also civilian officials to accompany the army. One would have expected the term for civil governors in general, and not the specific term "judges,"<sup>238</sup> but it is the latter that John of Ephesus uses. In addition to the dukes, Tiberius wanted Magnus to have with him some judges apparently in order to try Nu'mān and the other sons of Mundir since their revolt and violent actions made them outlaws from the point of view of Roman law. The passage in John of Ephesus on Mundir and his defense after he was accused supports this, as well as the passage on Nu'mān when he, too, was arrested and spent some time in Constantinople. Thus the Byzantine army that marched with Magnus was composed not only of soldiers who were to solve problems by force, but also judges who would deal with the legal dimensions of the Ghassānid revolt. So the federate Ghassānids could be tried according to Roman law.

The first thing Magnus accomplished was the enthronement of Mundir's brother as king. Byzantium did not look to another federate group, such as the Tanūkhids or the Salīhids, in order to choose a king from among them. The Ghassānid dynasty had reached such a pinnacle of power and prestige that it was inconceivable that federate Oriens could have been administered without one of them as the king of the federate establishment.

Most of the Ghassānids, under the four sons of Mundir, were in revolt

<sup>237</sup> Although the idiom of John of Ephesus seems to suggest that it accompanied him when he went to Oriens from Constantinople; *HE*, p. 133, lines 1–2. This is difficult to accept, since the army of Oriens would have been the natural Byzantine force to call upon, and one must assume that John of Ephesus was writing loosely. Stein suggested that the army put at the disposal of Magnus was that available after the battle of Tela d'Manzalat was fought: *Studien*, 95.

<sup>238</sup> Syriac *dayyānê*: *HE*, textus, p. 178, line 5; correctly translated by Brooks as *iudices*; *HE*, versio, p. 132, line 35; p. 133, line 1. Although *dayyanā* can also mean "governor," it is not its usual meaning and must be understood in its correct legal sense.

and had pitched their camp in the desert outside the reach of regular Byzantine forces. So it is not clear over whom Mundir's brother was made king and how he performed his duties. The presumption is that, as some of the princes were Chalcedonians, those Ghassānids that were attached to them remained within Oriens, as did former *foederati*, the Salīḥids and the Tanūkhids, who were orthodox and not Monophysites. So Mundir's brother was probably made king over these. Thus Tiberius' plan starts to make sense. A new Arab phylarchate in Oriens could be reconstituted along these lines, which would have satisfied ecclesiastical demands and would have made the rebellious Ghassānids superfluous. Byzantium needed Arab federate power in Oriens, and Tiberius did not want to do away with it but to replace it with one that was acceptable to both *imperium* and *ecclesia*.

Tiberius' plan was frustrated by the death of the newly installed king, and thus Byzantium reverted to dealing with the sons of Mundir, especially Nu'mān, the eldest and crown prince. There is some doubt, however, about the identity of the one who died since the idiom of John of Ephesus could lead to some confusion. The relevant sentence reads: "And the first thing he (Magnus) did was to install the brother of Mundir as king, who died twenty days after."<sup>239</sup>

The chapter (43) in John of Ephesus that speaks of Magnus' mission has for its title: "On the second descent of Magnus and on his death which overtook him, and the cessation of his intrigues and wickedness."<sup>240</sup> It is natural to think that the one who died was Magnus. Nöldeke, however, construed the sentence in such a way as to suggest that the one who died was Mundir's brother,<sup>241</sup> and the word order of the Syriac sentence supports Nöldeke's position; the relative pronoun in Syriac that introduces the sentence on the death after twenty days immediately follows the reference to Mundir's brother and not to Magnus.<sup>242</sup> So Nöldeke must be right in concluding that the one who died after twenty days was Mundir's brother and that Magnus died later, but not before he had that encounter with Nu'mān, which must have happened after the death of the newly installed king. The duration of the latter's reign, according to Nöldeke, was ten days, but Brooks thought it was twenty in accordance with his reading of the Syriac word.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>239</sup> *HE*, p. 133, lines 2–3: "Et primo fratrem Mondir regem . . . constituit, qui post viginti dies mortuus est."

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132, lines 29–30.

<sup>241</sup> See *GF*, 30, followed by Brooks in his Latin version of John of Ephesus, *HE*, p. 133, lines 2–3.

<sup>242</sup> *HE*, textus, p. 178, line 8; it should be noted that there is a little lacuna between the relative pronoun *haw d'* and *malkā*. Neither Michael the Syrian nor Bar-Hebraeus has anything to say on this Ghassānid Chalcedonian brother.

<sup>243</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 30; for Brooks, see *HE*, versio, p. 133, line 3.

After the sentence on the death of Mundir's brother, the Syriac fragment that has survived comes to an end, but there is preserved from the following sentence some seven words, not consecutively following one another, which Brooks translated: "Et tandem catervae . . . fraudulenter . . ." <sup>244</sup> This is clearly a reference to how Magnus handled the tribes after the death of the newly installed king. The presumption is that Magnus was able to attract some of the federate tribes to his side fraudulently or even to subdue them. <sup>245</sup> Unfortunately the epitomators of John of Ephesus, including Michael the Syrian, have not chosen to include this valuable information in their works.

Michael did, however, mention how Magnus returned to deal with Nu'mān, the eldest son of Mundir. He clearly preferred to include the picturesque rather than what was historically more important. The French version of Michael the Syrian's epitome of John of Ephesus reads as follows:

L'empereur ordonna à Magnus d'envahir le pays des Ṭaiyayê, et de s'emparer des enfants de Mondar. Magnus commença par essayer de tromper Na'man et lui fit dire: "Si tu viens près de moi, je t'établirai à la place de ton père". Na'man fit venir un jeune homme, le revêtit de ses propres habits et l'envoya avec quelques hommes.

Magnus en le voyant, lui dit: "Tu es Na'man?"—Il répondit: "Je le suis; et voici que je suis venu selon ton ordre". —Alors Magnus dit: "Voici le rebelle révolté contre le roi. Mettez lui les fers!"—Alors ce jeune homme le plaisanta et dit: "De même que vous avez voulu tromper, vous avez été trompés. Par le Christ! je ne suis pas Na'man". —Magnus voulut le tuer. Le jeune homme dit: "Pour moi, je devais être mis à mort ou par mon roi, si je n'étais pas venu, ou par toi, si je venais. La mort sera donc pour moi un éloge".—A cause de cela, Magnus le renvoya après des tortures. <sup>246</sup>

Magnus' tenacity in thinking that he could deal with the sons of Mundir after his betrayal of their father is remarkable. But he was wily and probably thought that Nu'mān, in spite of all that had happened, would be interested in reestablishing contact with the Byzantine authorities, both for the sake of his father and for the future of the Ghassānid phylarchate, thrown into disar-

<sup>244</sup> *HE*, versio, p. 133, lines 3–4.

<sup>245</sup> That he subdued the tribes or seized them could be supported by a mutilated word in the Syriac version of which only the three initial letters have survived, *m-th-k* (*HE*, textus, p. 178, line 10). This could be the passive participle of the Syriac verb *k-b-sh* in the Ethpe'el form, meaning "to be subdued." This might receive some confirmation from the fact that John of Ephesus, in speaking of Magnus' assignment a few lines earlier concerning the sons of Mundir, uses the same verb in the active voice, *nekbūsh*, "that he was to subdue" the sons of Mundir; *ibid.*, line 4.

<sup>246</sup> See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 350. Bar-Hebraeus, too, epitomized this episode; see *Chronography*, 82.

ray by the betrayal and revolt, even as his father had written to Justinianus after his withdrawal from the service of Byzantium in the early 570s. Magnus' turning to Nu'mān may also show that the restoration of Arab-Byzantine relations could only be effected by turning again to the Ghassānid house of Munḍir.<sup>247</sup>

It is clear, however, from the account that Magnus wanted not to reconcile him but to capture him, as Tiberius had ordered; possibly the order had been inspired by Magnus himself, whose hostility to the house of Munḍir apparently was considerable. It is also clear that this must have taken place after the death of Munḍir's brother, whom he had made king, since it is inconceivable that his message to Nu'mān would have carried any conviction if the brother had still been alive. After his father had been the victim of two Byzantine conspiracies, Nu'mān was understandably reluctant to trust the Byzantine authorities, especially when represented by Magnus, the betrayer of his father, who had arrested him after inviting him to a banquet, thus from the Arab point of view violating the sacred duty of a host. Hence the trick he himself now played on Magnus, by sending him one of his young followers.

Nu'mān was described by John of Ephesus as an even more intelligent and warlike man than his father.<sup>248</sup> The first epithet is relevant in this connection both in the conception and the execution of the trick he played on Magnus. He sent a young man in his stead<sup>249</sup> and let him put on his own clothes in order to lead Magnus into thinking that he was truly Nu'mān. This raises the question of what clothes Nu'mān wore. Certainly those of an officer in the Byzantine army, since he was a high-ranking phylarch and probably already the crown prince. If he was truly *stratēlatēs*,<sup>250</sup> such as an inscription could suggest, he would have worn the clothes appropriate to such a high officer, the military uniform of a Byzantine general.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>247</sup> In Michael's account, Magnus' contact with Nu'mān appears as the first act of his mission after his return to Oriens; his *commença* is contradicted by what has survived of John of Ephesus' account of the return of Magnus to Oriens, where it is explicitly stated that his first act was the installation of the new king, Munḍir's brother; see *HE*, versio, p. 133, line 2.

<sup>248</sup> For the word *astutior* to describe Nu'mān, see above, 464 with note 208.

<sup>249</sup> That this follower was a young man is an important detail, evidence of Nu'mān's age. Around 582 Nu'mān, the eldest of Munḍir's surviving sons, was still a young man. This is relevant in discussing whether or not Maurice finally restored him later in his reign and whether he was the king whom the Arab poet Nābiga lauded in his Ghassānid panegyrics. As he was a young man in 582, he could easily have been living some two decades later and have been vigorous enough to conduct the arduous campaigns that the poet describes. On this see below, 563–68.

Noteworthy in the exchange between the youth and Magnus is the piety of the youth; he swears by Christ and considers death at the hands of Magnus will guarantee him posthumous praise, which testifies to the attachment of the Ghassānid followers to the cause of their masters.

<sup>250</sup> For *stratēlatēs* applied to Nu'mān in the Greek inscription, see below, 505.

<sup>251</sup> For such military uniforms as were worn by the Byzantine *stratēlatēs*, see G. Ravegnani, *Soldati di Bisanzio in età giustiniana* (Rome, 1988), pl. 1.



Both the courage and the intelligence of the youth who was sent in place of Nu'mān are remarkable. The first—which could have sent him to his death—reflects the loyalty that the followers of the Ghassānids had toward their masters. His intelligence is clear from the exchange between him and Magnus after the truth became known that he was not Nu'mān. The failure<sup>252</sup> to capture Nu'mān represented Magnus' last act. After telling the story, Michael says that Magnus died soon after, clear indication that it was not Magnus who died after twenty days but Mundir's brother. Thus came to an end the life of Magnus, who mishandled the Ghassānid affair and who proved to be the evil genius of Tiberius, the emperor who ruined Arab-Byzantine relations, which had been carefully developed by Justinian.

### XIII. AN AYYŪBID AMBASSADOR IN CONSTANTINOPLE: 'ADĪ IBN-ZAYD

One of the major sources for the history of the Arabs before the rise of Islam, *al-Aghānī*, records an embassy sent to the court of Constantinople by the Persian king in the last quarter of the sixth century.<sup>253</sup> This embassy should be distinguished from the one mentioned and described by Menander and dispatched to Justin II in 567, as the account of the embassy in *Aghānī* makes amply clear.<sup>254</sup>

The account is brief but very instructive. It tells of the dispatch by Kisrā (Chosroes) of 'Adī, who belonged to the house of Ayyūb;<sup>255</sup> the warm reception accorded 'Adī by the emperor, who let 'Adī ride the *barīd* (*veredi*), the state post, in order that he might see the extent and glory of his kingdom, as was the custom of the kings of the Romans; and finally how in this way he visited Damascus and its vicinity. 'Adī returns to Persia and gives the Persian king the gift the emperor entrusted him with.

The account is an important document that increases the data on Arab-Byzantine relations in this period. However, the first problem is the identity of the Kisrā (Chosroes) and the Qayṣar (Caesar) who are involved in this diplomatic transaction. Kisrā could be either the famous Anūshravān who died in 579 or Parviz who reigned from 590 to 628 with a brief interruption in the 590s. If Kisrā is used, as it often is in Arabic, for the Persian king in general, he could also be Hormuzd IV who reigned from 579 to 590. The case for the

<sup>252</sup> Nöldeke, possibly depending on an Armenian version of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, mistakenly thought that Magnus succeeded in capturing Nu'mān; see Nöldeke, *GF*, 30. Stein followed Nöldeke and thus duplicated his mistake: *Studien*, 95.

<sup>253</sup> On this see *Aghānī* (Beirut, 1971), II, 85.

<sup>254</sup> On this see the section on Menander and on the house of Ayyūb, above, 307–9, 315–18.

<sup>255</sup> This house of Ayyūb, the Ayyūbids of pre-Islamic times, should be distinguished from the other illustrious house of Ayyūb, the Ayyūbids of Saladin. On 'Adī, see J. Horowitz, *Islamic Culture* 4 (1930), 31–69; and above, 316 note 28. For scholarship on 'Adī and his poetry, see Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 178–79.

reign of Parviz rests on the fact that it was the reign that witnessed friendly relations between the two monarchs, at least until the death of Maurice in 602. On the other hand, the striking detail that ʿAdī was brought to Damascus suggests that this was a period of eclipse for the Ghassānids, the inveterate enemies of the Lakhmids. So this could point to the period of estrangement in the 570s between Mundir and Justin II or to the later estrangement during the reign of Tiberius<sup>256</sup> when Mundir was captured and shortly after was exiled by Maurice. In any case, the embassy may be dated to the last quarter of the sixth century.

Closely related to the identity of the two rulers involved is the question of the occasion for this embassy. There are two possible occasions: (1) It was a goodwill embassy on the accession of the new Persian king. It then would have been dispatched by either Hormuzd IV after 579 or by Parviz after 591. The second alternative is the more attractive, because of the friendly relations between Maurice and the latter. (2) On the other hand, the embassy may have been related to the Ghassānid revolt in the 570s and early 580s, which explains the curious dispatch of ʿAdī to the region associated with the Ghassānids. It is recorded by John of Ephesus that, during the revolt in the 570s and the withdrawal of the Ghassānids from the service of Byzantium, the Lakhmids took advantage of the fact that the watchmen of the *limes* were sulking, and so they attacked Roman territory.<sup>257</sup> Maurice may have anticipated a Lakhmid attack and, to guard against it, may have initiated a diplomatic effort with the Lakhmids, the enemies of the Ghassānids. The Lakhmids had sent embassies before to Constantinople, as had the Byzantines to Ḥīra. It was not beneath Maurice to do so,<sup>258</sup> and even to add insult to injury by sending ʿAdī on the *veredi* to the very region that was the stamping ground of the Ghassānids. He may even have bribed the Lakhmids with some gold, as Justinian had done before him.

The choice of an ambassador of the description of ʿAdī is understandable. The versatility of ʿAdī was noted by those who wrote on him. In addition to his linguistic talents, he was an orator.<sup>259</sup> In the latter capacity, it was expected that he would acquit himself well before the Byzantine ruler. The accounts of the embassies that have survived and that were exchanged between Ctesiphon and Constantinople reveal the ambassadors as orators who defend

<sup>256</sup> L. Cheikho conjectured that it was to Tiberius II that ʿAdī was sent; see his *Shuʿr-āʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿd al-Islām* (Beirut, 1967), 444.

<sup>257</sup> On this see above, 357.

<sup>258</sup> On the animosity of Maurice toward Mundir and his house, see above, 446–47, and below, 610–11. The Ghassānids had defeated the Salīhids, the 5th-century phylarchs, and superseded them as the new *foederati* of Byzantium. They suddenly reemerge fighting in the Persian war of Maurice's reign in 586; see below, 551–53.

<sup>259</sup> Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 193.

the policies of their respective masters eloquently. Furthermore, he was an Arab, whose mother was from the tribe of Ṭayy, and was also a Christian, all of which would have commended him to a ruler such as Chosroes Parviz.<sup>260</sup> The latter owed his life to a certain Ḥassān of the tribe of Ṭayy, who gave him his own horse, al-Ḍubayb, which enabled Parviz to escape;<sup>261</sup> thus he was grateful to the Arabs, and his involvement in Christianity is well known.

Most interesting in the account in *Aghānī* is the statement that the emperor put ʿAdī on the *veredi* on a sightseeing tour of the empire in order to impress him. The *Aghānī* adds that this was the custom of the emperors when receiving foreign visitors. This is another element in the account which speaks for its authenticity. It is fully documented in the account of Malchus that describes the visit to Constantinople and Byzantium of Amorkesos, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo I.<sup>262</sup>

Traces of ʿAdī's trip to Byzantium and his impressions are recorded in his poetry. His *Dīwān* (collected poems) has survived, although not in its entirety. It is an important literary and historical document of many dimensions, but only its relevance to his embassy to Byzantium will be discussed here. There are first the three verses he composed after visiting the region of Damascus, evidence of his visit there.<sup>263</sup> In these he expresses his nostalgia for his native Iraq and Ḥīra and remembers his boon companion and the wine parties.<sup>264</sup>

Perhaps more important are the four or five references to the *Rūm*, *Rhō-maioi*, that are scattered through the *Dīwān*. In one of the verses of a poem he wrote while in prison, after Lakhmid court intrigues soured his relations with the king, Nuʿmān, he reflects on the transience of human life and how it also involved the rulers of the earth, the mightiest among them, the kings of the Persians and the Romans: "And Banū al-Aṣṣfar (the Sons of the Yellow One), / the generous and noble, the kings of the Romans! not / one of them, worthy of being remembered, has remained."<sup>265</sup> The description of the king of the Romans as *kirām* ("noble, generous"), coming from a vassal of their adver-

<sup>260</sup> See above, 316.

<sup>261</sup> See Maṣʿūdī, *Murūj* (Beirut, 1965), I, 314–15.

<sup>262</sup> On this see *BAFIC*, 100–101.

<sup>263</sup> For these, see *Aghānī*, II, 85.

<sup>264</sup> The verses present some difficulties in interpretation deriving from references to Dūma and Jayrūn. On Dūma, see *EI*, s.v. Dūmat al-Jandal. Jayrūn must have been a locality in the vicinity of Damascus, or within the city, which the Gate of Jayrūn (Bāb Jayrūn) faced. A monograph that deals with Bāb Jayrūn is not helpful on what Jayrūn was or where it was; it is mostly on the gate in Islamic times, while the part on the pre-Islamic period is full of legendary accounts: see Shams al-Dīn al-Ṣāliḥī, *Qurraṭ al-Uyūn fi Akhbār Bāb Jayrūn*, ed. S. al-Munajjid (Damascus, 1964). The commentary in the *Dīwān* on these three verses does not grapple with the difficulties which they present; see *Dīwān ʿAdī ibn-Zayd al-ʿIbādī*, ed. M. al-Muʿaybid (Baghdad, 1965), p. 186. On Jayrūn, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>265</sup> *Aghānī*, II, p. 115, verse 5.

saries, the Sasanids, is striking and could suggest that ʿAdī was impressed by what he had seen during his visit. What is more, it could reflect that the sympathies of ʿAdī, the Christian Arab, were really with the emperor of the Christian Roman Empire, in spite of his allegiance to the fire-worshipping kings of Persia.<sup>266</sup> The epithet *madkūr*, “worthy of being mentioned,” may also suggest that this was the period of the “dwarfs,” the successors of Justinian, who did not command among the Arabs the respect that Justinian had commanded. If so, it is an interesting commentary on how contemporaries felt about these successors.

Some verses in the *Dīwān* mention the *Rūm* (*Rhōmaioi*) together with the word *qintār* (*centenarium*).<sup>267</sup> Although the word was not unknown to the Arab poets of pre-Islamic times, its recurrence in what has survived of the *Dīwān* is striking. It immediately brings to mind the problem of the subsidies that plagued Lakhmid-Byzantine relations and that involved exactly the *centenarium* of gold, the hundred pounds of gold that Justinian paid the Lakhmids and which is expressly referred to in the negotiations that preceded the Peace of 561. This *centenarium* that the Lakhmids received must have been remembered in this region, and the reference to it in the *Dīwān* confirms the reality of the transaction between Justinian and the Lakhmids. It could also raise the question of whether the Byzantines resumed the payment during their quarrel with the Ghassānids, as a sop to the Lakhmid Cerberus.

The account of ʿAdī’s embassy to Constantinople in *Aghānī*<sup>268</sup> no doubt derives from the book that Hishām al-Kalbī wrote on ʿAdī ibn-Zayd.<sup>269</sup> But this most probably derives from a book that ʿAdī must have written on himself, an account of his embassy to the Byzantines.<sup>270</sup> He would have done so in much the same way that Nonnosus, after his diplomatic mission, wrote a book on his own mission.<sup>271</sup> Just as Nonnosus included ethnographic digressions on the peoples he met and the regions he visited, so must ʿAdī have done, since it is recorded that he was invited to travel extensively in the land of the Byzantines, a journey that included a visit to the Damascus region.

<sup>266</sup> Kisrā (Chosroes) is referred to as Kisrā of the kings, Kisrā al-Mulūk, meaning “king of kings”: *ibid.*, verse 6.

<sup>267</sup> See *Dīwān*, pp. 53, 125; especially important is the verse that speaks of the *Rūm*, giving him a *centenarium* (p. 53), but the verse otherwise is not crystal clear.

<sup>268</sup> Ṭabarī does not have the account of the embassy, which is preserved only in *Aghānī*. Ṭabarī’s interest in Byzantine history was minimal. Nöldeke, who translated Ṭabarī’s account of the house of Ayyūb, naturally could not include in it the account of the embassy nor did he expatiate on it. He accepted its historicity and made a brief comment on it in *PAS*, 312 note 1.

<sup>269</sup> On Hishām and ʿAdī, see *BAFOC*, 354.

<sup>270</sup> He no doubt prepared for the Persian king an official account of the embassy on his return, and so his book would have been an elaboration of this account.

<sup>271</sup> And this was customary among Byzantine ambassadors; such was the account of Julian, the ambassador to the Southern Semites ca. 530.

That he did so is also suggested by the poetic fragment referred to above, which he wrote on the region.

#### XIV. THE GHASSĀNID MATRIMONY

In one of his longer footnotes, Nöldeke discussed two expressions in two passages of John of Ephesus, which led him to believe that the Ghassānid Mundir had several wives. He drew an analogy with Nu'mān, the Lakhmid king of Hīra, and concluded in a final observation that the church condoned this as long as Mundir was ecclesiastically married only to one wife.<sup>272</sup> The problem he raised is an important one for the quality and ethos of federate Christianity.

It is not altogether surprising that Nöldeke should have reached this conclusion which he drew from an examination of the two expressions. These are ambiguous and indeed could give that impression on the "polygamy" of Mundir. But his chosen interpretation was facilitated by the fact that Nöldeke, as has been indicated in this volume (and discussed further in *BASIC II*), had the impression that the Ghassānids were pastoralists<sup>273</sup> or semi-pastoralists who, coming from a pagan Arabia, had brought with them some of that paganism and the social customs that went with it, possibly including polygamy. Moreover, he showed no great interest in, or appreciation of, the religious dimension of Ghassānid life<sup>274</sup> and history, and limited himself in his monograph to the extraction of dry, but valuable, secular *realia* on the Ghassānids pertaining, among other things, to their ranks and titles and the chronology of their rulers.

A close examination of the two expressions and the contexts within which they occur will reject this view totally,<sup>275</sup> but before doing this it is well to make some preliminary observations on the Ghassānids as Christians and Monophysites of Oriens and as Christian Arabs of the Azd group.

#### A

The Ghassānids belonged to the world of the sixth century when the ideals of monogamy had been preached both by Roman civil law and by the Christian Orthodox Church. The church considered marriage not a contract but a sacrament and frowned on divorce and consecutive marriages of widowers and divorcees. Condoning simultaneous marriages, or polygamy, was

<sup>272</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 29 note 1.

<sup>273</sup> In one context (*GF*, 18), he pictured them as plunderers and said they were good at plundering and so on.

<sup>274</sup> He denied Arethas and the phylarchs comprehension of the nature of theological disputes; *GF*, 21. On Arethas and theology, see *BASIC I.2*, 746–55, 805–24.

<sup>275</sup> In all fairness to Nöldeke, it must be mentioned that he drew his conclusion after some hesitation. He was bewildered by the two expressions; see *GF*, 29 note 1.

completely out of the question in the Christian Byzantine Orient to which the Ghassānids and their ecclesiastical leaders belonged.<sup>276</sup>

Sexual morality was especially important in the particular region in which the Ghassānids lived, namely, in Syria in the larger sense, for this is the region where unfolded a severe type of asceticism involving celibacy and sexual purity. Its physical expression was the vast number of monasteries with which the Ghassānids were involved, both as Christians and as Monophysites who valued celibacy. Thus the polygamy of a leading Monophysite figure such as Muṣṣā is inconceivable. The region was full of monasteries, of pillar saints,<sup>277</sup> of holy men who reminded their Ghassānid admirers of the importance of the ideal of sexual purity. As has been pointed out recently, it is not "addressed in Syriac patristic literature, not even in polemics criticising the practice. Moreover, we have virtually no examples of polygenous marriages in other early Syriac literature to suggest that it was a known practice in Christian Syria or Mesopotamia."<sup>278</sup> Thus the polygamy of a pious, zealous, and leading Monophysite such as Muṣṣā has to be rejected.

Muṣṣā was a Ghassānid, and this federate group in particular, among all Arab groups who moved in the orbit of the Christian Roman Empire, was in a special relation to Christianity, of which they were fanatic adherents.<sup>279</sup> The Ghassānids were the protectors of the Monophysite movement in Oriens throughout the sixth century; they were also the builders and endowers of monasteries and often presided over Monophysite church councils. Especially relevant in this connection concerning sexual behavior and the charge of polygamy are two facts. First, the poets who visited them from Arabia and left behind panegyrics on these princes and kings were struck by the high standard of morality at the court of the Ghassānids. One of them, al-Nābigha, makes special mention of sexual purity and chastity, especially as he used to frequent the court of the Lakhmid Nu'mān in Ḥīra, not a model of sexual behavior.<sup>280</sup> Second, Ghassānid women are known chiefly from the matronymics that Ghassānid kings used. This in itself is significant and implies that they were so famous and also strong that their sons used their names rather

<sup>276</sup> For the most recent and authoritative statement on this, see J. Meyendorff, "Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," *DOP* 44 (1990), 99–107.

<sup>277</sup> On the obedience of the converted Arabs to ecclesiastical laws, attested as early as the 5th century, see the appendix in *BAFIC*, 164–66. For their devotion to St. Simeon, the Stylite, see *ibid.*, 159–64.

<sup>278</sup> See Eleanor A. Doumato, "Hearing Other Voices: Christian Women and the Coming of Islam," *IJMES* 23 (1991), 192.

<sup>279</sup> On this see below, 554–56.

<sup>280</sup> This will be treated at length in *BASIC II*; for the time being, see *Dīwān al-Nābigha al-Dubayānī*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1977), p. 47, line 27; p. 101, line 4. For Nābigha's poem on Nu'mān's wife, al-Mutajarrida, see *ibid.*, pp. 89–97.



than those of their fathers to identify themselves, such as Ibn Mariya, Ibn Hind, Ibn Salma.<sup>281</sup> The implication could be that they would not tolerate rivals in the Ghassānid matrimonial chamber. So it is unlikely that they would have tolerated polygamy on the part of their respective husbands, in addition to what has been said about the ideal of Christian marriage within which they were united with their spouses.

Mundir the Ghassānid, who inherited his father Arethas' kingship and supreme phylarchate, was closely associated with him, especially after he was named successor in 563. Arethas, the legendary Ghassānid king, became a model for his sons and descendants, a matter of much relevance to this discussion. He was a pious, zealous Christian whose contributions to the welfare of Monophysitism have been described in detail in this volume. He was a contemporary and friend of Emperor Justinian, who was a model of a Christian husband and remained a widower for seventeen years after the death of Theodora in 548. Mundir, the Ghassānid crown prince since 563, on whom his father's and emperor's expectations rested, would not have departed from the rule of strict monogamy, scrupulously observed by both.

About the year 520 took place the martyrdoms in South Arabia, chiefly those of the Arabs of Najrān, the Balḥārith community related to the Ghassānids. They contributed to the *ecclesia* new martyrs, notably Arethas, whose feast falls on 23 October, and the woman martyr, Ruhayma. The Ghassānids were their cousins, who, even more than the Monophysites of Oriens, cherished their memory and commemorated their anniversaries in church calendars and synaxaria. Especially relevant are the sentiments of Ruhayma on marriage, which confirm that Christian Najrān was a monogamous community and, what is more, one that took pride in the fact.<sup>282</sup>

Mundir, who appears at the very beginning of his reign in 569 as "lover of Christ" (φιλόχριστος) in a Syriac document, and who, throughout the reign, appears as a genuinely pious Christian, would not have violated the rule of monogamy enjoined by his church.

## B

None of the above observations will, of course, prove Mundir's innocence of what Nöldeke had attributed to him, polygyny. The argument must stand or fall principally on the basis of examining the Syriac expressions involved. These will be examined in relation to the context in which they belong. The two passages come from the account of the final phase of Mundir's phylarchate

<sup>281</sup> See *BASIC* II.

<sup>282</sup> On all this, see *BASIC* II. On the speech of the martyr Ruhayma, see *Martyrs*, 57–58. Note the evocation of Christ the bridegroom, together with the ideal of chastity, and the abhorrence of promiscuity and polygamy that this implies.

in Oriens, when Magnus lures him to Ḥuwwārīn, captures him, and carries him away to Constantinople for house arrest and eventual exile in Sicily.<sup>283</sup>

1. In the first passage Munḍir remonstrates with Magnus. After the latter told him of Tiberius' decision to have him carried to Constantinople, Munḍir deprecates the decision and, among other things, says that if he deserted his camp, the Persian Arabs would come and capture his wives/women and his sons. The Syriac phrase translates in Latin as: "uxores et filios meos captivos faciunt," and was so translated by Nöldeke: "die persischen Araber möchten meine Frauen und meine Kinder gefangen nehmen." The crucial word in the Syriac phrase is *nshey*, which does mean "wives," but it also means "women."<sup>284</sup> When one remembers this and places the passage against the background explained in the first part of this section on Christianity among the Ghassānids, the interpretation of the word as "wives" ceases to be mandatory and the other meaning, "women," becomes possible, even imperative. Taking the women of the other tribal group captive was a well-known incentive in the inter-tribal wars of pre-Islamic Arabia. This is what Munḍir is referring to: he is speaking not as a *husband* but as a *sayyid*, an Arab tribal chief concerned about the fate of the tribal group. He is referring to the women in his camp, which consisted of the wives of his brothers, sons, and other chiefs. Thus, when set against the context of his Christianity and Arabness, the phrase in Syriac should yield "women," not "wives," which is perfectly justified by the semantics of Syriac.

2. The second phrase is even clearer than the first when the context within which it occurs is carefully examined. John of Ephesus says that on his arrival in Constantinople, Tiberius ordered that Munḍir be accommodated as he had been before when he visited Constantinople and granted him and those with him an allowance. He was not received at court, and thus he remained with one wife, two sons, and one daughter. The Latin version reads as follows: "Et cum ingressus esset, rex mandavit ut qua antea devernatus erat deversaretur; et ei et eis qui cum eo *erant* sumptus adsignatus est. Itaque mansit nec receptus est, cum unam uxorem suam et duo filios et unam filiam secum haberet."<sup>285</sup> The relevant sentence is the last, which enumerates the members of his family that were allowed to be with him during his arrest and exile in Constantinople, especially the phrase *unam uxorem suam*, which in Syriac reads, *ḥdā athtbeh*.<sup>286</sup> Nöldeke argued that this means one wife, with the clear implication that Munḍir had more than one wife, and it must be admitted that the

<sup>283</sup> See above, 455–63.

<sup>284</sup> For the Latin version, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, p. 131, lines 3–4; for the Syriac, see *HE*, textus, p. 175, line 30. For Nöldeke see *GF*, 29 note 29.

<sup>285</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, versio, p. 131, lines 17–20.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, textus, p. 176, line 15.

way John of Ephesus cast the sentence could suggest that. But a more careful reading of the Syriac, and also relating the final sentence to the whole passage to which it belongs, will yield a conclusion different from Nöldeke's. The ecclesiastical historian was describing the details of the condition of Munḍir's arrest and the allowance he was permitted. It is almost as if members of his family were being itemized for the *sumptus*. So, in this enumeration, which sounds like an inventory of what Munḍir was allowed, John of Ephesus naturally chose to use numerals in referring to members of his family. Consequently, he expressed himself in such a way that suggested Munḍir had more than one wife, *ḥdā aththeb*. But even this phrase, when examined carefully, will show that it is not an argument for his polygamy. If this had been the case, the Syriac would have been *ḥdā min nesbeyh*, not *ḥdā aththeb*, which phrase might be translated "his one wife,"<sup>287</sup> and could be an explicit declaration of his monogamy.

Finally, an argument may be deduced from the pages of the anti-Ghassānid historiographical tradition in Greek, to which Evagrius belonged. In his chapter in the *Ecclesiastical History* on the capture, arrest, and exile of Munḍir, Evagrius, that archenemy of Munḍir and friend of his enemy Maurice, simply said that Maurice deported him to Sicily "with his wife and some of his children." In Greek it reads: *σὺν γυναικί*.<sup>288</sup> The clear implication of the Greek sentence is that he had only one wife, but many children, which is the fact about Munḍir. Had this been otherwise, Evagrius would have delighted in advertising the fact in order to heap more vituperation on Munḍir, and he was in a very good position to be informed on the point since he lived in Antioch in Oriens and Munḍir was a well-known figure to him in that diocese. That Evagrius was not above such gossip, if it had existed, should be clear from a passage in which he gives an account of the incestuous fornication charge leveled against Patriarch Gregory, his patron.<sup>289</sup>

Nöldeke concluded his footnote by saying that Munḍir's "polygamy" may be paralleled by that of Nu'mān, the Lakhmid king of Ḥīra, who continued to lead a polygamous life even after his baptism, and that the church condoned the latter's polygamy as long as he was ecclesiastically married to only one wife. Both observations may be rejected. The case of the Lakhmid Nu'mān is hardly a valid analogy. He belonged to a long line of heathen ancestors who even exulted in the persecution of Christians; his grandfather, the famous Alamoundaros of Justinian's reign, used to outrage Christian sentiment in his raids on Oriens. Nu'mān, a confirmed heathen who used to sacrifice to

<sup>287</sup> As indeed the translator may have thought when he rendered it "unam uxorem suam." I should like to thank Sebastian Brock for sharing his thoughts with me on this passage.

<sup>288</sup> See Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Bidez and Parmentier, p. 223, line 23.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, Book VI, chap. 7, pp. 225–26.

al-ʿUzzā, the Arab Venus, was converted ca. 590, only after he was taken ill and was cured. He had led a polygamous life before, involving two women from the tribe of Ṭayy as part of his Arabian policy of marrying into the powerful tribes of the region in order to keep peace in the desert. The Nestorian church, in need of a protector in Zoroastrian Persia, must have been jubilant when Nuʿmān converted, and since he already had many wives, it was hardly good ecclesiastical politics to ask him to divorce all his wives with the exception of one. Besides, this would have created for the Nestorian church a preposterous situation—the church recommending divorce.<sup>290</sup>

The Ghassānids were the inveterate enemies of the Lakhmids, whom they looked down upon as heathens and allies of the fire-worshippers, where polygamy was practiced. They went out of their way to advertise differences with the hateful Lakhmids, and so Nuʿmān could hardly have been a model for the Ghassānid Muḍīr or even a distant analogy for him.

The church in the Orient would not have condoned Muḍīr's alleged polygamy.<sup>291</sup> Its stance on this point is clear, especially Syriac Monophysitism to which Muḍīr belonged; it had an ascetic strand in it. Such violation of the Christian ethic in its most intimate dimension of human relations, related to one of the mysteries of the Christian faith, would have been inconceivable, and all the more so as Muḍīr was the protector of the Monophysite church, who, like his father before him, sometimes presided over church councils. It is impossible to believe that one who appeared before the assembled hierarchs of his church in that capacity would have done so as a polygamous Christian.

## C

Nöldeke's prestige has influenced other writers who came after him and who noted that footnote in his monograph on the Ghassānids. Among them may be counted E. Stein, R. Aigrain, H. Charles, and P. Goubert. The most stimulating of these scholars was Stein who, in one of his notes, drew attention to German Christian polygamy, and this has led the present writer to go back to the proto-Byzantine period for some fruitful analogies.<sup>292</sup> Stein accepted Nöldeke's conclusion on the polygamy of Muḍīr and drew an analogy with that of the Prussian king of the eighteenth century, Friedrich Wilhelm I

<sup>290</sup> On Nuʿmān see Rothstein, *DLH*, 117, 142–43.

<sup>291</sup> Apparently stricter than the church in the West, which on occasion seemed to endorse polygamy, as when Pope Gregory II in a decretal of the year 726 stated that "when a man has a sick wife who cannot discharge the marital functions, he may take a second one, provided he looks after the first one," quoted in Doumato, "Hearing Other Voices," 198 note 98.

<sup>292</sup> See Stein, *Studien*, 94; Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1216; H. Charles, *Le christianisme des arabes nomades sur le limes* (Paris, 1936), 67; Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 255. F. Nau writes ambiguously on this point and does not mention Muḍīr by name; see Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens*, 62 note 2.

(1744–97). The king was a frank polygamist who contracted two “marriages of the left hand” with Fräulein von Voss and Countess Dönhoff.

This is a far-fetched analogy; more appropriate is the polygamy not of the Hohenzollern Prussian king but of the Hohenstaufen Holy Roman emperor, Frederick II, *stupor mundi et immutator mirabilis* (1194–1250). He is more relevant because he belonged to the medieval *Sacrum Imperium*, in addition to the fact that he was an Arabophile or Islamophile. He welcomed Jewish and Islamic scholars to his court, and was an avowed polygamist, who kept his wives secluded in oriental fashion and who actually had a harem at Lucera. And, not irrelevantly, he was king of Sicily whither Muṣṭafī was exiled.<sup>293</sup>

Even closer than the case of Frederick II is that of the German federate princes of the early medieval period, the western counterparts of the Arabs. In spite of the insistence of the church on monogamy, the Merovingian kings, even after their conversion to Christianity, practiced polygamy.<sup>294</sup> Dagobert had numerous concubines in addition to his three wives, and Clothar I married two sisters, Ingund and Aregund, thus violating canon law on polygamy and the marriage of two sisters.<sup>295</sup> Apparently Nöldeke was unaware of the polygamy prevalent among the Germans of western Europe in late antiquity and in medieval times, which persisted until it reached its climax in 1534 when, in the German city of Münster, the more radical Christian sect of the Anabaptists proclaimed polygamy as the ideal form of marriage.<sup>296</sup>

In spite of the rejection of Nöldeke’s conclusions on the polygamy of the Ghassānid Muṣṭafī, his views on this matter have led to a fruitful discussion. It has drawn attention to the fact that the Ghassānid household was a Christian one, in which the rule of monogamy was strictly observed in obedience to the Christian matrimonial ideal. The Ghassānid phylarch in exile had his wife and his children: one daughter and two sons. He left behind him in Oriens other sons and possibly other daughters but no wives. Nöldeke’s views on Ghassānid polygamy have also drawn attention to a comparison of the Ghassānid Arab matrimonial practice to that of the Germans, their counterparts in the West, who indulged in polygamy on occasion, as evidenced by the practice of their monarchs, both Merovingian and Hohenstaufen. The comparison is necessary since, as has been explained in an earlier volume of this series, the Arabs are treated here as the “Germans of the East.”

<sup>293</sup> On Frederick II, see P. K. Hitti, *A History of the Arabs* (London, 1970), 609–12; and T. C. van Cleve, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen* (Oxford, 1972), 299–318.

<sup>294</sup> On this see D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985), 49, 62.

<sup>295</sup> Even repugnant to Islamic canon law in a religion that, under certain circumstances, allows simultaneous tetragamy.

<sup>296</sup> See J. Craincross, *After Polygamy Was Made a Sin* (London, 1974), 1.

The data for the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium are singularly arid when it comes to their private life, and it is only the Arabic sources, prose and verse, that enliven the accounts that have survived on their political and military history.<sup>297</sup> This incidental datum in John of Ephesus, although presented in a context of political intrigue, nevertheless gives a glimpse of the Ghassānid household and reveals in the private life<sup>298</sup> of the Ghassānids an important facet of their social history which luckily can be enriched by contemporary Arabic poetry.

## XV. GREEK FEDERATE EPIGRAPHY

In a volume devoted principally to the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, it is well that the few inscriptions associated with them be assembled and discussed together. They are a precious source for the study of Arab-Byzantine relations and support what the literary sources say on the place of the Ghassānid Arab *foederati* in the history of the late sixth century. Hence it is necessary to examine them in detail, especially as they have not been subjected to a thorough treatment and sometimes have been erroneously interpreted, even by Nöldeke himself. Since the appearance of his classic work on the Ghassānids, more inscriptions have been discovered. There are now a total of five: three pertaining to Munḍir's reign, one to his son Nu'mān's, and one to a Ghassānid phylarch referred to in the inscription by his sobriquet.

The three inscriptions that pertain to the reign of Munḍir were discovered at Hayyāt in Batanaea (al-Bathaniyya) in the Provincia Arabia, at Ḍumayr in Syria, and at Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) in Euphratesia. Only two of these—the first and the second—were known to Nöldeke when he wrote his monograph on the Ghassānids.

### 1. Hayyāt

The inscription at Hayyāt speaks of Flavius Seos, son of Olbanos, and his son Olbanos, who at their own expense constructed the entire court, from the foundations to the top, in the time of Munḍir, *paneuphemos* and *patricius*, in the year 473 of the province (A.D. 578), in the eleventh indiction:<sup>299</sup>

+ Φλ(άβιος) Σέος Ὀλβάνου ἐπίτροπος) καὶ Ὀλβανος υἱὸς ἐξ ἰδίων ἔκτισαν τὴν πᾶσαν αὐλὴν ἀπὸ θεμελίων μέχρι ὕψους, ἐπὶ

<sup>297</sup> For this see BASIC II.

<sup>298</sup> For private life in late antiquity, see P. Brown, "Antiquité tardive," in *Histoire de la vie privée* (Paris, 1985), I, 225–99.

<sup>299</sup> For the inscription, see W. H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de le Syrie* (repr. Rome, 1968), p. 596, no. 2110; and *Greek and Latin Inscriptions*, American Archaeological Expedition to Syria, ed. W. K. Prentice (New York, 1908), III, no. 367, pp. 290–91. The orthography of two of these inscriptions is sometimes inaccurate.



τοῦ πανευφ(ήμου) Ἀλαμουνδάρου πατρ(ικίου), ἐν ἔτι υογ' τῆς ἐπαρχ(είας) ἰνδ(ικτιώνος) ια'.

Nöldeke noted the inscription briefly on three occasions:<sup>300</sup> once when he was arguing that the Ghassānids were not endowed with the title "king" (*basileus*) and cited the inscription which does not refer to Mundir as such; on another occasion, when he was discussing the date of the reconciliation between Mundir and Justin II, which Nöldeke assigned to 578; the third in the context of his discussion of the title "Flavius" as applied to Mundir, when he noted its application to this Seos of the inscription whom he considered a *Beamter* of Mundir's, perhaps a client.

Two of these views of Nöldeke's<sup>301</sup> have been examined and found erroneous, and so it is necessary to reexamine the inscription in its entirety. The name of the builder of the αὐλή is Seos son of Olbanos, two Arabic names that are rather unusual. His son has the name of his grandfather, which is not unusual among the Arabs. One can only guess what the two Arabic names are; "Seos" is possibly Sā'is, Sha's, Shay' or Shayi',<sup>302</sup> if the final letter is the Greek *sigma* often attached in transliteration to non-Greek names. The second name, Olbanos, could be Arabic, some such name as Arabic ʿUlban, of the morphological pattern *fu' lān*.<sup>303</sup> The employment of the patronymic is quite Arabic.<sup>304</sup>

"Flavius" as his *praenomen* presents more of a problem. Nöldeke thought that it was the same honorific title that Mundir had and that is reflected in another inscription to be discussed presently. But this depends to a great extent on the status of this Seos. He is referred to as ἐπίτροπος, a term that admits of no precise meaning in this context. If Seos was a minor official, it is unlikely that "Flavius" was the honorific title such as that assumed by Mundir, but one assumed by him rather than bestowed on him. If so, it reflects the loyalty of Seos to the house of the Second Flavians, in much the same way that many of the soldiers in Egypt assumed the *praenomen* "Flavius."<sup>305</sup>

<sup>300</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 13, 24–25, and 16 note 1.

<sup>301</sup> Namely, the first and the second. Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1213) repeated Nöldeke's mistake on the date of the reconciliation of Mundir with Justin II. For the examination of Nöldeke's view on the kingship of the Ghassānids and Mundir's reconciliation with Justin, see above, 113–16, 362.

<sup>302</sup> For approximations to these suggested Arabic names, see G. Lankester Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto, 1971), 364.

<sup>303</sup> On κώμη Ὀλβανῶν, see *IGLSYR*, IV, pp. 314 ff.

<sup>304</sup> Cf. its use by the phylarch of the Ḥarrān inscription, above, 326. It is noteworthy that the Ghassānid supreme phylarchs, such as Arethas and Mundir, do not use the patronymic in inscriptions.

<sup>305</sup> On "Flavius," as applied to the Ghassānid Arethas, see above, 260. After centuries of association with Rome, both the pagan and the Christian empire, the Arabs of the Provincia

The most important word in the inscription is ἐπίτροπος, which describes Seos and to which it is difficult to give a precise meaning. Nöldeke considered Seos as *epitropos* to be a *Beamter* of Mundir's or perhaps a client.<sup>306</sup> If so, the inscription gives a glimpse of the inner organization of the Ghassānid phylarchate, of officials under the supreme phylarchs who would perform certain duties including construction work. The Ghassānid onomasticon is well known, but the name of the *epitropos* suggests a person with a non-Ghassānid affiliation. He could also be a Rhomaic Arab who was not related to the federate phylarchate. As to what exactly *epitropos* means, it is safest to relate it to its context.<sup>307</sup> Flavius Seos seems to take pride in what he did; he constructed the whole courtyard from the foundations to the top. So it is possible that he was the superintendent of the construction.<sup>308</sup> But what else he was, especially in relation to Mundir (which would be most valuable to know) is not clear. The courtyard is constructed from private funds contributed by Flavius Seos and his son; so it must have been a public building, not a private house, evidence for the public-spiritedness of the house of Seos.<sup>309</sup>

The Ghassānid profile of the inscription is reflected in the phrase ἐπὶ τοῦ πανευφ(ήμου) Ἀλαμουνδάρου, πατρικίου, "in the reign of Mundir, *paneuphemos* and *patricius*." This is noteworthy, even remarkable. Instead of referring to the reign of the Byzantine *autokrator* or the provincial governor, Flavius Seos and his son refer to the reign of Mundir. This is all the more remarkable in that the inscription is precisely dated by the provincial Era of Bostra and by indiction.<sup>310</sup> Such must have been the fame and prestige of the Ghassānid king that buildings were dated by his reign, just as they had been by that of his father, Arethas. This could suggest (but not necessarily) that Seos the *epitropos* was in some way related administratively to the Ghassānid

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remained wedded to their Arabic names, although they may have added a Roman one. Their names proper remained Arabic, and the same is true of the Ghassānid phylarchs, whose drawing on the Arabic onomasticon is another indication of their retention of much of their Arab identity.

<sup>306</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 16 note 1; Prentice (*Inscriptions*, p. 291) translated it "procurator." See Appendix III, below, 522–24.

<sup>307</sup> For the various meanings of the word, see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, and F. Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1925–31), III, 117–18.

<sup>308</sup> It is noteworthy that *epitropos* is used alone and not as part of a phrase which would have indicated its precise meaning. Hence dependence on the context for arriving at the correct meaning, and it suggests "superintendent." For *epitropos* in one of the novels of Justinian, see M. Kaplan, *Les propriétés de la couronne et de l'église dans l'empire byzantin (Ve–VIe siècles)*, *Byzantina Sorbonensia* 2 (Paris, 1976), 52, where the author takes it to mean *inspecteur*.

<sup>309</sup> This is clearly a secular building, and yet a cross stands at the beginning of the inscription—evidence of the Christianity of the builders, the house of Seos.

<sup>310</sup> Even more precisely, either the spring or summer of A.D. 578, corresponding to that of the Era of Bostra 473, as noted by Sartre, *TE*, 182.

king, as does the employment of *patricius* and *paneuphemos*, since they indicate that Seos knew not only of Mundir but also of his exact titles, confirmed in the inscription set up by Mundir himself at Dumayr.

It is also significant that Hayyāt is in Batanaea (al-Bathaniyya) northwest of the Ḥawrān, Auranitis, and west of Trachonitis,<sup>311</sup> where the bilingual Ḥarrān inscription was discovered.<sup>312</sup> So this is the Provincia Arabia, the principal province of the Ghassānid phylarchs and their power base in Oriens. In spite of this, the Ghassānid or federate affiliation of Seos cannot be established. It is noticeable that, unlike Sharāḥīl, the phylarch of the Ḥarrān inscription, Seos is not called a phylarch. Whatever he was, whether a federate or a Rhomaic Arab, he lives in the shadow of the prestigious supreme phylarch of the Provincia, Mundir, and so much so that he had to date the inscription with reference to his reign just as Sharāḥīl thought fit to refer to the campaign of his father, Arethas, against Khaybar for dating purposes in his inscription. And it is possible, as has been suggested,<sup>313</sup> that the Ghassānid phylarchs patronized construction work such as this courtyard. If so, this will be another indication to be added to many others that the Ghassānids were not nomads but an urban, sedentarized community.<sup>314</sup>

Seos and his son Olbanos, the two Arabs who funded the building of this structure, had another inscription carved in the west wall of the same court at the south side of the door. The inscription is much less informative than the main one just discussed. It omits references to Mundir, and Seos appears without "Flavius" before it. On the other hand, it gives more precision to the date of the construction of the building by indicating that it took place in the month of July. This is the less formal inscription, in which it was apparently deemed superfluous to repeat reference to Mundir and to inscribe "Flavius" before "Seos." But the two, father and son, were evidently anxious that their association with the building of the courtyard at their own expense should not be forgotten.<sup>315</sup>

+ Σεος Ολβανου, ἐπίτρο(οπος), κ(αί) Ολβανος, αὐτοῦ υἱός, ἐξ  
ιδίων ἀνέγειραν τὴν πᾶσαν ἀυλήν, μ(ηνὶ) Ἰουλ(ίῳ), ἰνδ. ια'. +

Finally, a word should be said on the structure itself, described by H. C. Butler who visited the village of Hayyāt, drew the plan for the house, and gave

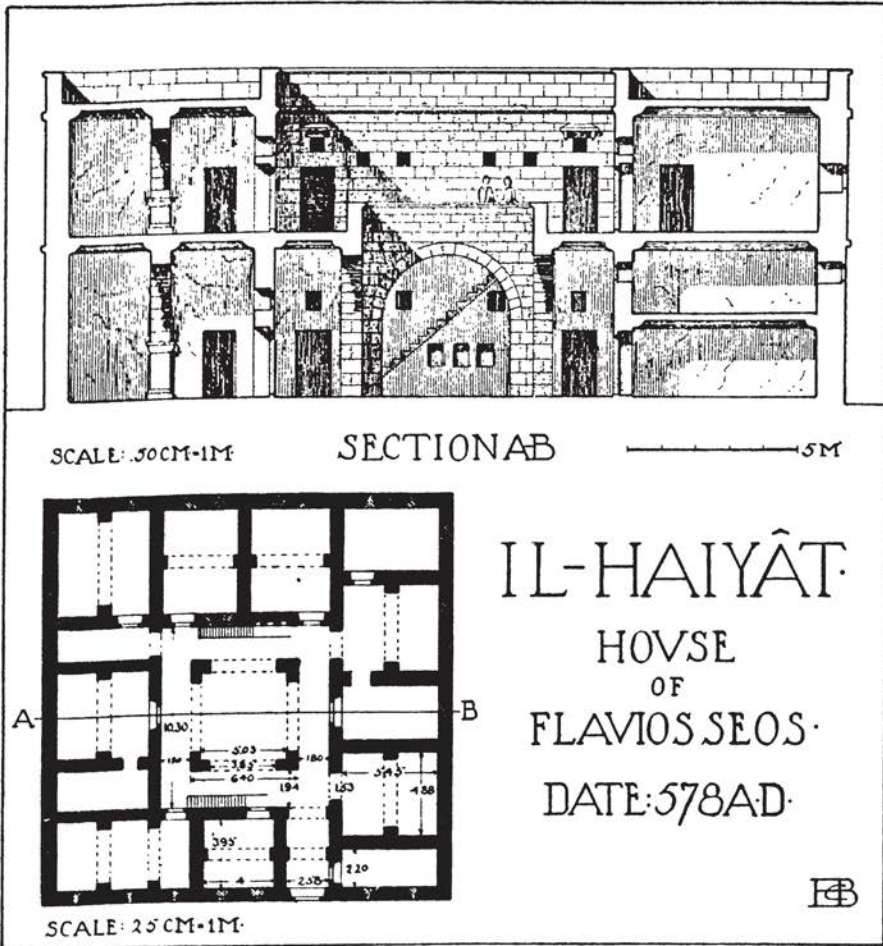
<sup>311</sup> For Batanaea, see the clear map in M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966), p. 92. Hayyāt is close to al-Shahbā' (Philippopolis) and lies due north of it; see R. Dussaud, *Topographie* (Paris, 1937), map II, opp. p. 24.

<sup>312</sup> On this see above, 325–31.

<sup>313</sup> See Sartre, *TE*, 182.

<sup>314</sup> On this see the section on the Ḥarrān inscription (above, note 312), where the phylarch appears as an urbanite, building a *martyrion*, and not a nomad pasturing his flock. Moreover, he takes pride, with the emphatic *ana* ("I"), in constructing the *martyrion*, just as Seos does in the construction of his courtyard. For the Ghassānids as sedentaries, see BASIC II.

<sup>315</sup> The inscription was published and commented on by Prentice, *Inscriptions*, p. 291.



a detailed account of the structure. Since it is a structure associated with the Ghassânids that has been well preserved,<sup>316</sup> it is well that Butler's account of it be given *in extenso*, as well as his drawing of the plan of the building.

This place is situated on the northernmost slopes of the Djebel Ḥaurân, in the rolling foothills which are only slightly higher than the Ledjâ. I visited the site in 1900; but, on that occasion, had barely time to study the Kalybé to the south of the village, which I have published.

HOUSE, Date: 578 A.D. At the time of my second visit I explored

<sup>316</sup> At least until 1901, when Butler found it occupied by the village shaykh.

the village, and found the ancient house mentioned to me by Dr. Littmann in 1900. The house in question is the largest in the town, and is occupied today by the *Shêkh* of the village. Its plan is unique (Ill. 322) among the ancient residences of Syria. It is large and well designed, with no less than twenty five rooms, large and small. According to two inscriptions the house was erected by one Flavios Seos a *procurator*,<sup>317</sup> under the famous Alamundaros, patrician, in the year 578 A.D. If we are to believe that the procurator with the Latin-Nabataean name, and his immediate family, were the only occupants of this house, we must assume a very magnificent scale of living on the part of the wealthy class in the Ḥaurân in the sixth century of our era. The building has been only slightly altered for modern use; the original plan and the interior arrangement of the two floors are unchanged, but only a part of the upper floor is inhabited. The house forms a large square of about 25 m. with an open court 10 m. square in the middle. The court is reached through an arched passage opening into its southeast angle. Within the court are four great arches, forming a square, which carry an open gallery for the upper storey. The rooms on the ground floor are alternately large and small, the former square with transverse arches, the latter oblong with corbel-and-slab ceilings, and divided into two storeys below the gallery. The rooms of the upper floor correspond exactly with those below them, except that the smaller rooms are apparently not subdivided into storeys. I found it impossible to enter all the rooms, especially three now occupied, but could see enough of the building to make a very satisfactory plan and section. The stonework of the interior is all well finished, the outer walls are of roughly dressed stones. The windows on the ground floor are small, some of them being only loop-holes. In the upper floor the openings are larger, and some of them are protected by long hoods carried on well-turned corbels. Other openings show the relation of the two-storey portions to the three-storey parts of the house. The east wall has deep grooves for descending water-pipes which resemble the perpendicular channels in the ancient baths of the Ḥaurân. The longer of the two inscriptions is inscribed upon the lintel of the westernmost doorway in the upper storey, on the north side of the court,—that on the left in the Section A-B in Ill. 322. Waddington says that the stone has been cut down; this may be true, but it is certainly in the place for which it was made, and the writing is intact.<sup>318</sup>

<sup>317</sup> On the function and identity of the *epitropos*, whom Butler and Prentice thought was a *procurator*, see Appendix III, below, 522-24.

<sup>318</sup> H. C. Butler, *Ancient Architecture in Syria*, PPUAES, 1904-5, Division II, Section A, Southern Syria (Leiden, 1907), 362-63.



## 2. Al-Burj

The second Greek inscription involving Mundir was found at what is now called al-Burj (el-Burg, Tower), a locality two kilometers south of the Roman military camp at Dumayr (Dmēr-ed-Dumēr) which lies northeast of Damascus, that is, in Phoenicia Libanensis.<sup>319</sup> In that locality Mundir erected a fort with a tower, Burj, hence its present-day name, since this was the only part of the fort that had survived when it was visited by the various scholars beginning with J. G. Wetzstein in the nineteenth century.<sup>320</sup>

The inscription speaks of the erection of the tower by Mundir whose name is given as Flavius Alamoundaros and who is described as *paneuphemos*, *patricius*, and *phylarchos*. Mundir renders thanks to the Lord God and to St. Julian for the safety he and his sons, described as ἐνδοξότατοι, were granted and vouchsafed. The inscription is undated:

+ ] Φλ(άβιος) Ἀλαμουνδαρο[ο]ς [ὁ] πανεύφημος πατρίκ(ιος) καὶ φύλαρχος εὐχαριστ[ῶ]ν τὸν δεσ[π]ότην Θε[ὸ]ν καὶ τὸν ἅγιον Ἰ[ουλ]ιανὸν ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας αὐ[τοῦ] καὶ ἐνδοξ(οτάτων) αὐτο[ῦ] τέκνων τ[ὸν] πύργο]ν ἔκτισεν. +<sup>321</sup>

This inscription is even more important than the one found at Hayyāt, since it was set up by Mundir himself. Thus it is an official statement on the phylarch and so is accurate in the data it provides on Mundir and the Ghassānid phylarchate in the late sixth century.

The inscription opens with the imperial *nomen gentilicium*, Flavius, Φλάβιος, which his father, Arethas, also had, as did other members of the Ghassānid ruling house. The Ghassānids invariably had Arab names but qualified them with "Flavius," a link between them and the ruling *autokrators* in Constantinople who had assumed it since the rise of the house of Constantine, the Second Flavians.<sup>322</sup> As has been noted in discussing the same name in the previous inscription, it is not clear whether this was bestowed on Mundir as an honorific title by the emperor or whether it was assumed by him as a reflection of loyalty to the *autokrator*.<sup>323</sup> Whichever it was, it certainly reflected

<sup>319</sup> On those who visited the site, beginning with the first, Carlo Vidua, see E. Herzfeld, "Mshattā," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 42 (1921), 106. When R. Brünnow reached al-Burj, just before the turn of the century, the inscription had disappeared. It was rediscovered later, in the summer of 1963, by Klaus Brisch; see the present writer in "The Ghassān," *ET*<sup>2</sup>, II, 1021. Dumayr is in Phoenicia Libanensis; its localization in Palestine by Aigrain ("Arabie," col. 1219) must be an oversight.

<sup>320</sup> For the plan of the fort, see Appendix IV, below, 524–26.

<sup>321</sup> Waddington, *Inscriptions*, no. 2562c, p. 585.

<sup>321</sup> Waddington, *Inscriptions*, no. 2562c, p. 585.

<sup>322</sup> On "Flavius," see J. G. Keenan, *The Nomina Flavius and Aurelius: A Question of Status in Byzantine Egypt*, Ph.D. diss. (Yale University, 1968); and G. Röscher, *ONOMA ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΑΣ* (Vienna, 1978), 49–50.

<sup>323</sup> In discussing "Flavius," Nöldeke (*GF*, 15) thought that the title was conferred on Belisarius by Justinian, according to Novel 47. Belisarius does appear as "Flavius" in the novel,



the close ties that united the Ghassānid phylarchs with the house of Justin, who continued the tradition of using it as part of their titulature.<sup>324</sup> The inscription makes Mundīr the third Ghassānid to have Flavius as part of his name, while this imperial *gentilicium* continues the tradition of the assumption of Roman *nomina gentilitia* by Arab chiefs, princes, and kings in the Orient, such as the Abgarids and the Palmyrenes who were Septimii.<sup>325</sup>

His Arab name, Mundīr, comes next and is spelt Ἀλαμούνδαρος, which is noteworthy. Mundīr apparently accepts the spelling and had it reproduced in the inscription. The penultimate vowel is crucial in indicating what the name really means. If it is an *alpha* as in this inscription, the name could mean "the one who was vowed."<sup>326</sup> If it is an *iota*, then the name should mean "the one who threatens." The second orthography reproduces the name of the Lakhmid adversary of the Ghassānids, Mundīr, the celebrated Mundīr of the reign of Justinian. It would be rather surprising if Arethas called his son by the name of his adversary. It is not unlikely that he, being a good Christian, kept the consonantal skeleton of the name but changed the last vowel in Arabic from an *i* into an *a*, from Mundīr to Mundār, and thus changed the word from a pagan *nomen agentis* to a Christian *nomen patientis*.<sup>327</sup>

Πανεύφημος—*patricius*: the two words go together, and their collocation is important. They clearly are conjugates since the two appear together in the first inscription set up by Seos *epitropos*. The employment of *paneuphemos* clearly indicates that it was the highest of these honorific titles that began with *lamprotatos*, *clarissimus*. Mundīr represented the highest summit that the Ghassānid kings reached in the ladder of the imperial administration, and so the title used to describe him must have been the highest. Besides, it is used together with *patricius*, which was the highest *dignitas* Byzantium could bestow. The inscription thus makes clear that *paneuphemos* was the title that went with *patricius*. The attestation of *paneuphemos* in a Greek inscription set up by Mundīr himself makes it worthwhile now to go back to the Byzantine titles of Mundīr that appear translated in Syriac documents, and it should be a safe

<sup>324</sup> So, just as the dignity of *patricius* allied its bearer Mundīr to the emperor, who addressed the *patricius* as *pater*, so did the *nomen gentilitium* "Flavius" ally the Ghassānid phylarch to the imperial family in Constantinople.

<sup>325</sup> See M. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, trans. D. and T. Talbot Rice (Oxford, 1932), 111. The *foederati* remained non-citizens legally, but it is possible that their phylarchs and kings may have been granted honorary citizenship, just as the Palmyrene Arab aristocracy had been.

<sup>326</sup> Mundār, *nomen patientis* from *andara*, which normally means "threaten," could possibly mean the same as *nadara*, "vow."

<sup>327</sup> This possible, nuanced vocalic distinction would have been lost on Greek authors when they transliterated the two names and gave them the same orthography. Noteworthy is the fact that Stein chose to employ two different orthographies for designating the two Mundīrs, the Ghassānid and the Lakhmid, and adopted "Mundār" for the first and "Mundhir" for the second. He did this in order to guard against confusing the two; see Stein, *Studien*, 51 note 5.

guide on how to understand them.<sup>328</sup> The attestation of *paneuphemos* as the highest honorary title invites comparison with the attested title bestowed on his father, Arethas. In the Qaṣr al-Ḥayr inscriptions<sup>329</sup> of the late 550s, the father is referred to as *endoxotatos patricius*. Clearly there has been a change in what constituted the highest rank: it was *paneuphemos*, not *endoxotatos*, a conclusion confirmed by the application of the latter to Munḍir's sons in the same inscription. Although the inscription is undated, it is certain that the dignity of *patricius* was conferred on Munḍir when he succeeded his father, since it is attested in that important Syriac document<sup>330</sup> that dates to 570. And this became his regular Byzantine title in the Syriac document, as in John of Ephesus where it occurs many times.<sup>331</sup>

Φύλαρχος: the Ghassānid Munḍir, as his father before him, was a crowned king, a dignity he inherited from his father, who belonged to an Arab royal house, and which was confirmed by the Byzantine *autokrator*. But in the Byzantine administrative system and as the leader of the Arab *foederati*, he was a *phylarchos*, albeit a supreme one, in the Byzantine army of Oriens. This is most strikingly reflected in this inscription, set up by Munḍir himself, and thus accurately records the Byzantine profile of his self-image. He was king to his people, the Ghassānids, and in the "barbarian" world of the limitrophe and the Arabian Peninsula, but not within the Byzantine administrative system in Oriens. It is noteworthy that the term *phylarchos* is separated from *patricius*, which was a dignity. *Phylarchos* expressed his function as soldier in the service of Byzantium; it was both his self-image and the Byzantine perception of him. Far from its being a modest, colorless title, it was one that the *foederati* took pride in, and this is reflected clearly in the fifth inscription to be discussed in this section.<sup>332</sup> The use of *basileus* was of course out of the question for him in this context. He might conceivably use it in an inscription or a document that did not involve Byzantium and the administration in Oriens,<sup>333</sup> but he could not use it in an inscription carved over the door of a tower erected in the limitrophe for the defense of Byzantine Oriens, under the direction of the *magister militum* in Antioch.

Ὁ δεσπότης Θεός, ὁ ἅγιος Ἰουλιανός. Σωτηρία: Munḍir renders thanks to God and St. Julian for his safety and that of his children.

<sup>328</sup> On the ranks and titles of Munḍir in Syriac, see below, 512–18.

<sup>329</sup> See above, 259–60.

<sup>330</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 831.

<sup>331</sup> The patriciate of Munḍir was unnoticed by R. Guiland when he made a list of the patricians of the 6th century; see Guiland, "Les patrices byzantines du VIe siècle," *Palaeologia* 7 (1959), 271–93. On the patriciate, see the more recent article by R. Mathiesen, "Patricians as Diplomats in Late Antiquity," *BZ* 79 (1986), 35–49, and below, 512–18.

<sup>332</sup> For this inscription, see below, 509–12.

<sup>333</sup> Such as the Syriac ecclesiastical document referring to the Ghassānid Abū Karib as king, noted by Nöldeke, *GF*, 26.

Although δεσπότης can be applied to both the First and the Second Person of the Trinity, it is more likely applied here to God the Father, but Christ is alluded to by the two crosses that appear at the beginning and at the end of the inscription. There are many saints with the name Julian. Oriens has more than one saint called by the name of the Apostate, but which Julian is meant here is not quite clear. However, the chances are that he is St. Julian of Emesa.<sup>334</sup> Whichever St. Julian this was, the religious sentiment expressed in the inscription attests to the piety of the Ghassānid phylarch, which his family is known for. The involvement of the Ghassānids, especially Muḍīr, in religion is well known and is documented in the Syriac literary sources.<sup>335</sup> But its documentation in this inscription is especially welcome, because the religious sentiment is not expressed in the context of building a church or monastery but a military establishment, a tower. War and religion are entangled, and the tower protects the Christian Roman establishment.

A key word in the inscription is Σωτηρία, the "Safety" of Muḍīr and his sons, for which he thanks God and St. Julian. This raises the question of what danger he had escaped. If the inscription had been dated, it would not have been difficult to guess since the reign of Muḍīr is fairly well known. So the choices are many and wide open. It could have been after one of his many campaigns against the Lakhmids or the Arabs of the Peninsula; it could have been after his return from a journey attended by perils. The sources refer to him and his sons on certain occasions: once during a campaign against the Lakhmids and another time during his visit to Constantinople in 580. It is possible that it was after one of these two occasions that he thought fit to render thanks.<sup>336</sup>

His sons: the reference to his sons and their description as ἐνδοξότατοι raise some questions. Clearly the term *endoxotatoi* (*gloriosissimi*) is used not as a literary locution but as a technical term. This is clear from its use in an

<sup>334</sup> On St. Julian of Emesa, see *BASIC* I.2, 965–66.

<sup>335</sup> The sources written in Greek, such as Evagrius and Theophylact, dismissed Muḍīr laconically as a traitor; see below, 592–97. The inscription is, therefore, valuable since it is in Greek and reveals the Christian affiliation and piety of the Ghassānid king, completely obscured by the Greek sources.

<sup>336</sup> On his sons' participation in military operations, see above, 411. His journey to Constantinople was long, and it is possible that it was punctuated by some dangerous encounters. Brūnnow dated it sometime between 570 and 573; see R. E. Brūnnow and A. Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, 3 vols. (Strassburg, 1904–9), 355–56. This dating is possible but far from certain.

An inscription was found at Mushannaf (Mushennef), not far from Hayyāt, where a temple of Zeus and Athena was built in the time of the Herodian king Agrippa. The temple was erected to the two deities in celebration of the safe return of Agrippa: ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κυρίου βασιλέως Ἀγρίππα καὶ ἐπανόδου. In this inscription the addition of ἐπανόδου makes clear that it is on the occasion of the king's return from some campaign or journey that thanks for his safety were offered. In the Burj inscription this is only implied, but is easily inferred. For the inscription, see Prentice, *Inscriptions*, p. 298.

official inscription set up by the supreme phylarch himself, who employs accurate technical terms for his titulature. His sons are lower in rank than he is, and the mention of both in the same inscription, referring to father and sons, clearly indicates that the *endoxotatoi* were below the *paneuphemoi*. That *endoxotatoi* was used technically, applied to his sons, is confirmed by the fourth inscription to be discussed in this section, where Mundir's son Nu'mān had this same rank.<sup>337</sup> The Ghassānid house had distinguished itself in the wars, and during Mundir's visit to Constantinople in 580, John of Ephesus mentions that Tiberius bestowed high titles on his sons; this reference may tip the scales in favor of the view that the inscription was set up by Mundir after his return from Constantinople—a long journey that may have been attended by some perils on the way.

The inscription confirms the references in John of Ephesus, who refers to his sons in the plural. They appear in the inscription all endowed with the rank *endoxotatos*, and not only Nu'mān who succeeded him. During the lifetime of their father, the supreme phylarch, they must have been more elevated in rank than the ordinary phylarchs, possibly non-Ghassānids who had the rank *clarissimus* (*lamprotatos*) and sometimes a higher rank such as *spectabilis* (*peribleptos*)<sup>338</sup> earlier in the century. The enhancement of the rank of the federate phylarchs toward the end of the century may thus reflect the rising importance of the phylarchal system after it had demonstrated its worth. So the picture of ranks that go with the federate organization becomes complex. At the head of the phylarchal pyramid rested the king and supreme Ghassānid phylarch with the rank *paneuphemos*, *patricius*; below him were distinguished members of the Ghassānid royal house, phylarchs with the rank *endoxotatos*; and below them were minor phylarchs with the ranks of *clarissimus* and *spectabilis*.

Apart from the light that the inscription throws on the rank *endoxotatos* in its application to distinguished phylarchs, the reference itself to Mundir's sons is noteworthy. There is no reference to his many brothers, and presumably they were also phylarchs in the service of Byzantium. This recalls the absence of reference to his brothers or other members of the family in the account that describes his journey to Constantinople in 580 when, summoned by Emperor Tiberius, honors were showered on him.<sup>339</sup> Clearly the inscription reflects the dynastic concern of Mundir. Just as his father, during his visit to Constantinople in 563, arranged for the succession of Mundir after his death, so must Mundir have thought of the problem of succession after him. He

<sup>337</sup> On this inscription see below, 505–9.

<sup>338</sup> On the ranks of the lesser phylarchs, see the novel on Arabia and the edict on Phoenicia, above, 196–200.

<sup>339</sup> On the Chalcedonian Ghassānids, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 27.

appears in John of Ephesus and in this inscription as a leader surrounded by his sons in war and in peace. The royal dynasty thus appears as a group of family members who stand together, and succession is from father to son. The phylarch who renders thanks in the inscription for his safety and that of his sons is in turn rewarded by the adoration of his sons, who rebel against Byzantium after their father was treacherously captured by Magnus, and in remonstrating with the authorities they refer to him not as king or phylarch Munḍir but as "our father."<sup>340</sup> Strong family ties always characterized the Ghassānid dynasty.

The Tower: in spite of his zealous involvement in the Monophysite movement, Munḍir was first and foremost a soldier, in charge of the defense of Oriens against both the Arab pastoralists across the *limes* and against the Persians. His military role is fully attested in the pages of John of Ephesus, the Syriac literary source, but obscured in the Greek. This inscription is the sole surviving epigraphic evidence that points to his role in the protection of the *limes* and points to an actual tower he built as part of a defense complex.<sup>341</sup>

This precious inscription makes possible the following observations on Munḍir and the Ghassānids. (1) The Ghassānids, contrary to a view in some circles, were not nomads but sedentaries who lived within the *limes* and engaged in numerous building activities of all sorts, as influential sedentaries in the region would.<sup>342</sup> (2) The inscription has relevance to the celebrated List of Ḥamza on the structures of the Ghassānids; it confirms their image as great builders; it shows that Ḥamza's list is not an exhaustive but a selective one, and that the role of the Ghassānids in the urbanization of the limitrophe and in the defense of the *limes* was even more extensive than his list suggests.<sup>343</sup> (3) The town of Ḍumayr, near which this tower is built, is not included in the list of towns associated with the Ghassānids, knowledge of which is owed to the *Dīwān* of the poet Ḥassān, who visited them in Oriens and wrote panegyrics on them.<sup>344</sup> Just as the List of Ḥamza is not complete on the structures erected by the Ghassānids, so the list of towns associated with the Ghassānids in this *Dīwān* is not complete either, and the inscription suggests that the Ghassānids had a much stronger and more extensive urban presence in Oriens than has been assumed. Ḍumayr was either a totally or a predominantly Arab town on the *limes*; hence the ease with which the Ghassānid Arabs could blend with its inhabitants.<sup>345</sup> (4) Finally, the erection of a tower by the commander-

<sup>340</sup> See above, 468.

<sup>341</sup> Thus recalling the tower built by his father at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, for which see above, 258. The third inscription, to be discussed presently, at Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), is not engraved in a tower but in a *praetorium*.

<sup>342</sup> On this see BASIC II.

<sup>343</sup> For the list see BASIC II.

<sup>344</sup> On Ḥassān as a source for Ghassānid history, see BASIC II.

<sup>345</sup> On Ḍumayr see Dussaud, *Topographie*, 263, 265, 270; also Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*,

in-chief of the *foederati* throws a bright light on the military role of these Arab troops in the defense system of Byzantium along the *Limes orientalis*. The *foederati* were a mobile force, a constituent unit in the field army of Oriens, mostly mounted swordsmen and lancers. The inscription adds a new dimension to their military assignment: their engagement in the *static* defense of Oriens such as the building of towers, watch towers for protecting Roman territory. This, of course, could not have been an isolated case, and Munḍir as well as his predecessors, such as his father Arethas, must have built many other military structures. Thus the view that the Ghassānids were the principal defenders of the *limes* against the Peninsular Arabs receives further support, as does the view that they were engaged in fortification works along the *limes*, either erecting new structures or repairing old ones, in a sense taking over from the regular *stratiōtai*, at least partially, the defense of the oriental *limes*.<sup>346</sup>

### 3. Sergiopolis (Ruṣāfa)

The third Greek inscription involving Munḍir was found in a building that the Ghassānid king erected outside the walls of Sergiopolis (Ruṣāfa) in Euphratesia. The inscription, which is preceded by a cross, is an acclamation engraved in the apse of the building. "The Tyche (Fortune) of Munḍir triumphs":<sup>347</sup> + ΝΙΚΑ Η <Τ>ΥΧΗ ΑΛΑΜΟΥΝΔΑ<Ρ>ΟΥ. On the west wall of the south pilaster there are inscribed two words: CΠΠΟΥΔΗΡΑ|ΕΥΩΛΑΒΟΥ, which apparently refer to the contractor whose name has unfortunately not survived.<sup>348</sup>

Although the inscription is the shortest of the Ghassānid inscriptions, consisting of only four words, it is by far the most important, as is the building in which it was found. Both the inscription and the building had been the

s.v. Ḍumayr. It is noteworthy that Yāqūt speaks of it as a village and *ḥiṣn*, a fort or castle, which indicates that in late medieval times its military installations were either functioning or visible. Noteworthy also is the fact that after the Nabataean Arabs lost control of Damascus, they retained it over Ḍumayr, presumably for its importance in the trade route system; see F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1938), II, 165. For a Nabataean inscription that betrays onomastically the Arab element in the population, see E. Sachau, "Eine nabatäische Inschrift aus Dmēr," *ZDMG* 38 (1884), 535–43.

<sup>346</sup> Ḍumayr, identified with Thelesa of the 5th-century *Notitia Dignitatum*, which lists two Saracen units as stationed there, will be discussed in the chapter on "Frontier Studies" in *BASIC* II.

<sup>347</sup> See *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leiden, 1934), VII, no. 188, p. 38, where two mistakes may be noted. The name of the Ghassānid king Munḍir, Ἀλαμούνδαρος, is wrongly cut as Ἀλαμίνδαρος, and the building is described as an *ecclesia*, whereas it is a *praetorium*. The exact location of the *praetorium* is some distance outside the north gate of Sergiopolis.

<sup>348</sup> I owe the information on the existence of these two words on the pilaster to Professor Cyril Mango, who divided the letters as indicated above and read the second word as ἐγ-γολάβος, "the undertaker," "contractor." Instead of the *rho*, the *gamma*, and the *omicron* of ἐγγολάβος, there appear in the inscribed word an *upsilon* and an *omega*, both mistakes. What the first word means is unclear.



subject of a protracted discussion by various scholars for a long time when, in 1939, two scholars settled two important questions concerning them both. Jean Sauvaget, in a fundamental article, cogently argued that Muḍīr's building was not an *ecclesia extra muros* but a *praetorium*,<sup>349</sup> while Henri Grégoire showed that the inscription, which had puzzled some scholars, was a familiar Byzantine formula.<sup>350</sup> These two distinguished scholars thus prepared the ground for a fruitful discussion of the inscription and the building, primarily the concern of the student of Ghassānid history and the Arab-Byzantine relationship in the sixth century. Sauvaget was an Islamic art historian and Orientalist, and Grégoire had no further interest in the subject. Therefore, almost half a century after Sauvaget wrote his article, the discussion may be opened anew, especially as the specialist on the Ghassānids, Nöldeke, was unaware of the building and inscription when he wrote his monograph in 1887. If he had been, his conception of Ghassānid history would have been different.<sup>351</sup>

The inscription and the building raise many important questions, but only those relevant to the scope of this volume will be discussed. First, what was the occasion for the erection of this *praetorium* by Muḍīr? The date of its construction has, unfortunately, not survived, and so it is not possible to date it with certainty. The reign of Muḍīr is so well documented and was so eventful that it could have been erected on any of a number of occasions: after a successful campaign against the Lakhmids; after his triumphant return from Constantinople; or after his reconciliation with Justin II in 575. The last is noteworthy since Sergiopolis figures prominently in the negotiations between Muḍīr and Justinianus, the *magister militum* who effected the reconciliation. It was there that the two met and Ghassānid-Byzantine differences were resolved.<sup>352</sup> So it is possible to argue that Muḍīr erected the structure in commemoration of that historic event.<sup>353</sup>

<sup>349</sup> J. Sauvaget, "Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis," *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 115–30, where earlier literature is discussed, involving Spanner, Guyer, Sarre, and Herzfeld.

I should like to thank Professor T. Ulbert for his communications (October and December 1987), in which he confirmed Sauvaget on the secular character of the building as a *praetorium* and on the cross at the top of the arch of the apse in the *praetorium* as belonging to the original structure. The *praetorium* will be discussed in his *Resafa IV*. Three of the monumental volumes on Ruṣāfa, published by the Deutsches Archäologische Institut, have now appeared.

I am now convinced that the building is not a church but a *praetorium*; therefore Muḍīr's structure referred to in *BAFOC*, 226 and 420 note 16, should be called a *praetorium extra muros*.

<sup>350</sup> See Grégoire's editorial note in Sauvaget, "Sergiopolis," 117 note 1, and his own article in which the phrase is discussed: "Notules épigraphiques," *Byzantion* 13 (1938), 165–82.

<sup>351</sup> Especially in his appreciation of Ḥamza's list of Ghassānid buildings.

<sup>352</sup> On this, see above, 373–84.

<sup>353</sup> As will be indicated further on, the building had an important function as an audience hall, and so its erection must also be related to its function. The date of its construction, however, could be related to the period after the reconciliation and the feeling on the part of



The Greek inscription, ΝΙΚΑ Η ΤΥΧΗ ΑΛΛΑ ΜΟΥΝΔΑΡΟΥΥ engraved in the apse of the Ghassānid praetorium, outside Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa, Syria (photo: courtesy Dr. Tilo Ulbert, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Damascus).



The Syriac sources, especially John of Ephesus, give glowing accounts of Mundir's career both as soldier and as conciliator of warring religious factions. None of this is conveyed in the Greek sources. This Greek inscription and the building in which it is inscribed are epigraphic and archaeological confirmation of the truth of the accounts of John of Ephesus. The inscription is an acclamation and a celebration of Mundir, the invincible warrior of the pages of John of Ephesus. Although the verb νικᾷ appears formulaic, in this case it is literally true of the ever-victorious soldier.<sup>354</sup> Striking, and in contrast to other inscriptions of Mundir, the Ghassānid phylarch appears here simply as Mundir without any titles or ranks; his name had become so well known that there was no need for further specification. Finally, the resonance of the acclamation is enhanced by the setting. It is inscribed not in a small tower or fort but in an impressive building, a *praetorium* outside the walls of Sergiopolis, a strategic station on the *Limes orientalis*, and a pilgrimage center, indeed the most important pilgrimage center in Oriens after Jerusalem. The inscription is in Greek, and so was intelligible to the Greek-speaking visitors to the shrine from all parts of Oriens.

The location of the *praetorium* in the far north, away from the Provincia Arabia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, had aroused the curiosity of Sauvaget.<sup>355</sup> But the location should present no problem. Around 530 Justinian had so extended the power of the Ghassānids in the whole of Oriens that a Ghassānid post and structure in Sergiopolis should cause no surprise.<sup>356</sup> Be-

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Mundir that he had to attend to that sector of the front which had been neglected during the period when he withdrew from the service of Byzantium. As will be argued in *BASIC* II, it is possible that the erection of the structure was related, at least partly, to an alliance with the powerful tribe of Bahrā', which had encamped in the vicinity.

<sup>354</sup> For the attempts of Sauvaget and Herzfeld to translate the acclamation, see Sauvaget, "Sergiopolis," 117 note 1, both invalidated by Grégoire's article in which this phrase figured prominently. Yet in spite of Grégoire's undoubted contribution to the understanding of this acclamation, I find it difficult to accept his rendition of it as applied to Mundir, namely, "Vive al-Mundir!": *ibid.* I take the verb ΝΙΚΑ to be in the indicative, and that it is meant to be emphatic by its position before ΤΥΧΗ, instead of the normal position after it. Hence the essence of the acclamation is to emphasize his triumphant or victorious career, and so the formula, even if it is common and stereotyped, because of its applicability to the ever-victorious Mundir, recovers its verve and animation. As noted by grammarians, the verb ΝΙΚΑ, among other things, expresses an enduring result when used in the present; see H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (repr. Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p. 423. Thus, in this case, it approaches the *semper victor* (ἀεὶ νικήτης) of the imperial titulature.

Since Grégoire discussed the formula νικᾷ ἢ τύχη, Alan Cameron returned to it in *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford, 1973), 76–80. It appears some sixteen times in the acclamations of the charioteers of the Alexandria circus; see Z. Borkowski, *Alexandrie* (Warsaw, 1981), II, 75–80.

<sup>355</sup> See Sauvaget, "Sergiopolis," 121.

<sup>356</sup> Sauvaget is aware of this in a general way, but not of data discussed in great detail in the chapter on the reign of Maurice in this volume. The chapter confirms Sauvaget's position on the *praetorium* and vindicates his views on its location in the north.

sides, during the reign of Muḏḏir and after a long lull in the Persian war, hostilities resumed during the reign of Justin II and continued for the best part of Muḏḏir's reign. Hence a Ghassānid station in the north near the Persian frontier is perfectly intelligible. Finally, a Ghassānid presence in and around Sergiopolis is explicitly documented in the Syriac sources and is not only a matter of inference. The name of the Ghassānid phylarch, Jafna, appears associated with Sergiopolis in the reign of Maurice and is attested in both primary and secondary sources, which have been analyzed earlier in this volume.<sup>357</sup>

The question of the *praetorium's* being *extra muros* can also be easily answered. The Ghassānids were legally not *cives*, and their residences and structures were on the whole outside Roman cities.<sup>358</sup> In this particular case, there were additional reasons for the structure's "extraterritoriality": Sergiopolis was a holy city and was surrounded by walls. A secular structure such as the Ghassānid *praetorium*, the masters of which were not *cives* but *foederati*, could be most appropriately built *outside* the city walls.

Finally, the function of the structure is important to determine. The conclusion that it was not a church but a secular building is the starting point, and there is no doubt that Sauvaget is right in suggesting it was a *praetorium* for Muḏḏir. Its function as a *praetorium* may be briefly discussed in relation to both the military situation along the oriental *limes* and to the religious scene in Oriens, pertaining to the status of Sergiopolis as a Christian pilgrimage center.

The role of the Ghassānids in the defense of the *Limes orientalis*, against both the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula and the Persians with their Lakhmid allies, has been discussed in detail in the course of this volume, and it has been shown that they played a crucial role. This is especially true of Muḏḏir whose military activity was centered in the north against the Persians, while references to Ghassānid phylarchs such as Jafna in the reign of Maurice locate the Ghassānids in the north explicitly near Sergiopolis. Hence the Ghassānid Muḏḏir needed a station and headquarters such as this *praetorium* not far from the Euphrates, near the theater of war against the Persians. There were also the Arab tribes of the region, both federate and non-federate, with whom he had to deal, and the precious reference to one of them, Bahrā', in the Arabic sources is most relevant.<sup>359</sup> Thus Muḏḏir needed an audience hall where he could meet the tribal chiefs of the region.

<sup>357</sup> On this see below, 562–63. In this connection, the inscription of Muḏḏir's son Nuḡmān, to be discussed in this chapter (below, 505–9), is further evidence of the Ghassānid presence in the north.

<sup>358</sup> Cf. the *martyrion extra muros* associated with the Saracens near Anasarthā in Syria; see *BAFOC*, 222–27.

<sup>359</sup> On Bahrā' see *BASIC II*.

The fact that the *praetorium* was so close to Sergiopolis, a pilgrimage center, is also significant for the discussion of its location and function. As has been indicated in the course of this volume, the Arab *foederati*, especially the Ghassānids, were zealous Christians and conducted their wars as soldiers of the Cross.<sup>360</sup> Sergiopolis was the object of pilgrimage for the Arabs of Oriens;<sup>361</sup> thus the choice of this location for the *praetorium* was a good one for Mundir. It brought to the environs of Sergiopolis an Arab presence, the center of which was the Ghassānid Mundir, whose fame and glory the inscription advertised. Just as the *imperium* and the *ecclesia* were interrelated in Byzantium, so were they in Ghassānid history, and the *praetorium*, a secular building outside the northern gate of Sergiopolis, the pilgrimage center, symbolized this interrelationship.<sup>362</sup>

#### 4. Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān

The fourth Ghassānid inscription relates to Mundir's eldest son Nu'mān, and was found at Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān in Syria II. It appears on a bronze plaque that belonged to "Naaman, the most glorious *stratēlatēs* and phylarch":<sup>363</sup> Νααμάν ὁ, | ἐνδοξ(στάτου) (καὶ) στρ(ατηλάτου) | (καὶ) φυλάρ(χου). A cross surrounded by two asterisks also appears on the plaque.

#### A

This is the only extant inscription that refers to Nu'mān, and it provides some important data on him.

1. Nu'mān is explicitly referred to as having the rank ἐνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*). This is confirmed by the Burj inscription, set up by Mundir,<sup>364</sup> in which his sons are mentioned together with this rank. As has been argued before, this must be a technical term, the well-known Byzantine rank, and not a literary locution. In the Burj inscription the names of his sons with that rank are not mentioned, but it was inferred that the eldest, Nu'mān, must

<sup>360</sup> Even in secular buildings and inscriptions, crosses were present, such as the one in this inscription in the *praetorium* and in al-Burj, where a cross precedes the first word of the inscription and another follows the last.

<sup>361</sup> On the Arabs and their veneration of St. Sergius, see *BASIC* I.2, 949–63. Most attractive are Sauvaget's discussion of this point and its relevance to the erection of the *praetorium*; see Sauvaget, "Sergiopolis," 128–29. He cites F. Nau on the date of the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Sergius as 15 November, when the church of St. Sergius was dedicated, according to the Jacobite Arab Synaxarion. The feast of St. Sergius, according to all martyrologies of the Orient and the Occident, was, however, 7 October; see Nau, *Christianisme*, 69.

<sup>362</sup> The foregoing discussion has been limited to what is relevant for the analysis of the inscription and its relation to the *praetorium*. Other important problems pertaining to frontier studies and the Arab material on Ruṣāfa will be discussed in *BASIC* II, which is devoted to such matters. Problems related to the Ghassānids and their involvement with Sergius and Sergiopolis will be dealt with in *BASIC* I.2, 949–63.

<sup>363</sup> See *IGLSYR*, IV, no. 1550, pp. 176–77.

<sup>364</sup> Above, 495, 499.



have been included. This inscription at Ma'arrat supports what has been said on the technical character of the rank in the Burj inscription since it explicitly names Nu'mān as a holder of it.

2. Comparing the epigraphic and literary evidence yields the conclusion that most probably this is the rank that was given Nu'mān by Tiberius when he visited the capital with his father, Munḍir, in 580, as recounted by John of Ephesus in his *Ecclesiastical History*.<sup>365</sup> If true, this would date the inscription to circa 580.

3. Reference to Nu'mān as *stratēlatēs* (στρατηλάτης) is unusual since this is the term applied to the Byzantine *magister militum* in Oriens. But in view of what John of Ephesus says in his account, namely, that Tiberius lavished on Munḍir and his sons all kinds of favors including military titles, it is not altogether impossible to believe that he conferred on him the title of *stratēlatēs*. This was not entirely unjustifiable since he was Munḍir's eldest and most prominent son, most probably already designated as his successor. However, even if this was so, and Tiberius did confer the title on him, it could have been honorific.<sup>366</sup>

4. His true function was, of course, that of phylarch, just as his father (king and federate commander-in-chief though he was) was also a phylarch, as Greek epigraphy at al-Burj describes him. The inscription reflects, as do those of his father, the Ghassānid Nu'mān, Byzantinized by the use of the Greek language, the Christian cross, and the Roman military ranks and titles.

Noteworthy is the fact that the inscription on the bronze plaque appears not in familiar Ghassānid territory, that is, Arabia or the limitrophe, but in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān between Ḥamā and Aleppo (Epiphania and Beroia). This could easily support what has been said earlier, that the Ghassānids had a much stronger and more extensive presence in Oriens than has been supposed. This is a station to the north in Syria and rather westerly, not so much on the eastern altitudes of the *limes*. Thus the Ghassānids are attested epigraphically in Arabia, Phoenicia, Syria, and Euphratesia. As to what the discovery of the plaque in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān implies, it could possibly argue that Nu'mān

<sup>365</sup> Above, 401.

<sup>366</sup> On other cases of *stratēlatēs* as an honorific title, see *PLRE*, III B, 1505–1506. Nu'mān must have been considered a distinguished phylarch around 580, and his subsequent career during the revolt justifies this view.

Something has been said on the military garb of the Arab phylarchs and that it may have approached the Byzantine style; see above, note 251, for the illustration, not inappropriate for Nu'mān. If he had been given the flattering title of *stratēlatēs*, he might have dressed as one. It is natural to suppose that the Ghassānids imitated the Byzantines in their military dress. Ḥassān, the poet laureate of Muḥammad, accuses the tribe of Tamīm, which moved in the Persian orbit, of affecting Persian dress. The Ghassānids were much more assimilated to Byzantium and would, even more than Tamīm, have imitated their overlords.

was the Ghassānid phylarch of Syria II. And it is tempting to bring together Nu'mān with the toponym that carries his name, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān.<sup>367</sup> In a previous volume it was suggested that Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān ("The cave of Nu'mān") could be associated with the Tanūkhid king who, too, was called Nu'mān. But in the case of that king there was no evidence for associating him with the place other than the name. In the case of the Ghassānid, this inscription found at Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān itself makes of him a much better candidate for this association.<sup>368</sup>

## B

Possibly related to this inscription is another, the provenance of which is not clear, a bronze bracelet in the form of a circular medallion on which appears St. Sergius on horseback, with the *pallium* floating on the croup of the horse. Around the circle there are crosses and the inscription "a cameleer of St. Sergius, the Barbaric":<sup>369</sup> Καμηλάριος τοῦ ἁγίου Σεργίου τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ. The editor of this inscription, C. Mondésert, has written perceptively on it, and most of his conclusions may be accepted for a better understanding of the role of the Arabs, especially the Ghassānids, in the protection of the shrine of St. Sergius at Ruṣāfa as well as the revictualing of Sergiopolis. The term *καμηλάριος* has to be distinguished from *δρομεδάριος*, the trooper mounted on a dromedary, who appears as a Byzantine soldier in the army of the Orient. The *καμηλάριος* is a cameleer, a caravaner engaged in transportation.<sup>370</sup> The term *τοῦ βαρβαρικοῦ*, which might startle at first as an epithet of the Roman soldier who became a celebrated martyr and military saint, derives from the well-known geographical "Barbarian plain" (*βαρβαρικὸν πεδίων*), within which Sergiopolis was located.<sup>371</sup>

The caravaner of this bronze bracelet could only have been an Arab, a Saracen. Sergiopolis was in the midst of an arid region and was dependent on caravan service for keeping it flourishing not only for the support of its inhabitants but also, or more so, for feeding and accommodating the crowds of pilgrims that would flock there. This is a safe inference, and this small bronze bracelet provides the documentary evidence for the existence of a caravan organization in the service of Sergiopolis and its saint. It is noteworthy that the

<sup>367</sup> On Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, see *BAFOC*, 377–78.

<sup>368</sup> The revolt of Nu'mān could even provide an etiology for the meaning of the toponym Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, in which the first element means "cave." It is possible that sometime during the revolt Nu'mān took refuge in a cave in this locality where he concealed himself from the authorities, and so gave it its name, Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān.

<sup>369</sup> See C. Mondésert, "Inscriptions et objets chrétiens de Syrie et de Palestine," *Syria* 37 (1960), 123–25.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 124 note 1.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

inscription speaks of the cameleer not as in the service of the city but of Sergius, a reflection of his religious conviction and of his attachment to the saint.

The *praetorium extra muros* of Mundir at Sergiopolis has documented the role of the Ghassānids in the life of that city, and they were without doubt heavily engaged in its protection and provisioning. The references in the literary sources also speak of their care for its cisterns.<sup>372</sup> So this Greek inscription, brief as it is, provides another datum for understanding how Sergiopolis was serviced, namely, by the existence of a caravan organization for provisioning it, and adds another to the various ways in which the Ghassānids serviced, directly and indirectly, the shrine of St. Sergius.

Mondésert tried to connect this inscription with that of Nu'mān. R. Mouterde had suggested that the bronze plaque was possibly part of the harness of Nu'mān and thought it possibly belonged to this cameleer as an identification indicating that he was in the service of Nu'mān. This is very possible but not certain. What is practically certain, though, is the involvement of the Ghassānids directly and indirectly in the caravan organization that serviced Sergiopolis.

### C

With the temporary suspension of the Ghassānid phylarchate, at least as presided over by the house of Mundir, Greek epigraphy as an ancillary for documenting the history of the Ghassānids peters out. As explained earlier, Byzantium did not wait long before it reestablished a Ghassānid phylarchate, downgraded as it was. It is only natural to expect that the phylarchs of the newly organized Arab *foederati* should have been endowed with some titles and ranks, and it is important to know what these were. A literary source that goes back to pre-Islamic times provides a safe guide to this question. Around 587 an official ecclesiastical letter sent by Peter of Callinicum, the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch, mentions the Ghassānid phylarch of the day, Jafna, and gives his title and rank, phylarch and the Syriac *meshabhā*.<sup>373</sup>

The Syriac term is repeated four times in the course of the document, sure sign that this is the authentic rank of the Ghassānid. This is the Syriac term that translates Greek ἐνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*), and it must be so in the case of Jafna since he appears as the ranking Ghassānid federate chief in this period. The accuracy of rendering *meshabhā* as ἐνδοξότατος is confirmed by the previously discussed inscription of Nu'mān, where the Ghassānid appears with the rank ἐνδοξότατος. Thus the Byzantine practice apparently was now to confer this high rank on the chief Ghassānid phylarch, but nothing

<sup>372</sup> See *BASIC* II.

<sup>373</sup> On this Syriac document, see *BASIC* I.2, 927–35.

higher. The Greek inscription of Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān and the Syriac literary source confirm each other.

The Syriac document calls Jafna a phylarch, and the term is not translated into Syriac but luckily transliterated, another indication that it had become a technical term,<sup>374</sup> meaning, as Procopius had explained earlier in the century, an Arab federate chief in treaty relationship to Byzantium. Thus the document leaves no doubt whatsoever that the chief in question was a phylarch in this sense. That the phylarch should have had this high rank should cause no surprise since Nu'mān, too, in the Greek inscription is called phylarch and *endoxotatos*. Thus the Syriac document reproduces accurately what the Greek inscription had done, when it reflected the true rank and title of the high Ghassānid chiefs in the employ of Byzantium in this period.

The Syriac document is also significant in what it does not mention. While Mundīr was *patricius*, so transliterated into Syriac, and while Nu'mān was also *stratēlatēs* in the Greek inscription, Jafna, who comes chronologically after the fall of the house of Mundīr, has no such title or function, neither *patricius* nor *stratēlatēs*; he is simply a phylarch, but with the high rank of *endoxotatos*. It is, therefore, possible that the patriciate was discontinued as a *dignitas* to be conferred on the Ghassānids, and if so, Mundīr would have been the last Ghassānid to enjoy that dignity. The *Basileia*, on the other hand, it is practically certain, was reconferred on the Ghassānids possibly around the year 600, since the Arabic sources on the Ghassānids are as confirmatory of it as they are silent on the patriciate.

## 5

In 1889 appeared a collection of Greek inscriptions copied by Rudolph Brünnow during his journey to the Provincia Arabia in 1888. One of these inscriptions was found in the house of the Shaykh of Ḍakīr, which lies on the eastern outskirts of al-Lajā, Trachonitis.<sup>375</sup> The inscription consists of only five words and speaks of one called Flavius Kathelogos, son of a phylarch: Φλ(άβιος) Καθελόγο(ς) υἱὸς φυλάρχου ὀρικός. The inscription is short, undated, and with no context such as the building of a church or a fort by the person whose name is recorded in it. No wonder that Brünnow was unable to comment on it. As will be seen from the following examination, it turns out to be one of the most valuable and exciting of all federate inscriptions.

Φλ(άβιος) Καθελόγο(ς): the name provides the first surprise and excitement. Flavius is the well-known *gentilicium*, assumed by federate Ghassānid officers. But so far the attestations of Flavius have been noted in connection

<sup>374</sup> If the term phylarch simply meant a *shaykh*, an Arab social and political term, Syriac would have translated it as such, not transliterated it as *phylarchos*.

<sup>375</sup> See ZDPV, I, Mitteilungen (Leipzig, 1899), no. 55, p. 87.

with the family of Arethas, his father, Jabala, and his son Mundir; now it is attested for one who is not likely to belong to that line of descent.

More important is Kathelogos, which can easily be identified with Arabic *Ḳātil al-Jūʿ*, "the killer of famine or hunger," a *laqab* (sobriquet) applied to one of the Ghassānid chiefs whose name is given as Imru'-al-Qays. According to the genealogists, he belongs not to the clan of the Jafnids, Banū Jafna, but to that of Banū Kaʿb, another clan descended from ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir.<sup>376</sup> Thus comparing the Arabic literary source with the epigraphic Greek has confirmed the essential reliability of the genealogical table of the Ghassānids which speaks of this figure, *Ḳātil al-Jūʿ*, and reveals him as a Ghassānid chief in the employ of Byzantium; what is more, it presents another clan within the ruling Ghassānid phylarchate, namely, that of Banū Kaʿb, to be added to those of Banū Jafna and Banū Thaʿlaba.<sup>377</sup> It is noteworthy that this Ghassānid figure does not use his real name, Imru' al-Qays, but the *laqab* *Ḳātil al-Jūʿ*, and this indicates that he was proud of it, a supposition confirmed by a verse ascribed to him in the Arabic source in which he prides himself on the hospitality related to his name.<sup>378</sup> At the same time, he adds to his name the imperial Roman *gentilicium* to reflect his loyalty to the emperor and to advertise his Roman connection. This, of course, became the pattern, as is attested for two other Ghassānid figures, Arethas and his son Mundir.

υἱὸς φυλάρχου ("the son of a phylarch"): this is a striking case of assimilation to the Byzantine system and also pride in it.<sup>379</sup> An Arab would normally add after his name that of his father,<sup>380</sup> but in this inscription the patronymic is discarded and instead there is reference to the fact that Flavius Kathelogos is son of a phylarch. The point is to indicate that his family's connection with Byzantium is not recent but of long standing. The use of the

<sup>376</sup> See Hishām al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-Nasab*, ed. N. Ḥasan (Beirut, 1986), 618–19; Ibn-Ḥazm, *Jamharat Ansab al-ʿArab*, ed. ʿA. Ḥārūn (Cairo, 1962), 372. ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir is the ancestor of the Ghassānids, to whom there is frequent reference in poems on them; see *BASIC II*.

<sup>377</sup> On the various clans within the Ghassānid ruling house, see *BASIC II*; for the clan Banū Thaʿlaba, see above, 5–6.

<sup>378</sup> See the verse in Hishām al-Kalbī, *Jamharat*, p. 619. Trachonitis is an extremely arid region; hence scarce rain could cause famine in the jurisdiction of the phylarch. Another Ghassānid had the *laqab* "Māʿ-al-Muzn" ("the water of the rain-bearing cloud"), also related to aridity and famine; this was none other than the ancestor of the Ghassānids, ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir (*ibid.*, 616).

<sup>379</sup> Another indication of Ghassānid loyalty to Byzantium.

<sup>380</sup> Indeed the poet of the Ghassānids, Ḥassān, who was a close relative of theirs but hailing from Medina in Ḥijāz, takes pride in Ghassānid ancestry, such as ʿAmr ibn-ʿĀmir and also in Banū Kaʿb from which *Ḳātil al-Jūʿ* is descended, and which he seems to have renounced in the inscription in favor of "phylarch." For Ḥassān's poems, see *BASIC II*.

Contrast Kathelogos of this inscription with Seos, above, 489–92, who although he is Flavius, yet does not discard his patronymic, Ὀλβανός.

Greek term φύλαρχος (*phylarchos*) here is another indication that the term has departed from its literal meaning, etymologically related to tribe, and that it became a technical term meaning a federate officer in the Byzantine army. Thus both Flavius and *phylarchos* emphasize the Byzantine connection. Noteworthy is the fact that his father had been a phylarch in the employ of Byzantium before him. The phylarchate was not hereditary, but in fact this is what it became since the sons of the ruling clan among the Ghassānids, the military aristocracy, would train their sons as warriors in the service of Byzantium. It is more clearly seen in the case of Arethas and Mundir, who succeeded him as king and supreme phylarch but who first had been a phylarch.

ὄρτικός: in this context the term must mean "he of the frontier, a frontiersman."<sup>381</sup> This is a precious description of the function of the Ghassānid phylarch in Trachonitis, the guarding of the frontier, and its importance is that it is the statement of the Ghassānid himself. These Arab *foederati* were, as is known, settled along the *limes*, and their function was, among other things, to guard the frontier. The fact is nowhere explicitly stated, although it can be easily inferred. It is therefore good to have it epigraphically attested in an inscription set up not far from the *limes* and also as a reflection of the self-image of the federate phylarch. The term coming at the end of the inscription, especially after the phrase "son of a phylarch," could also express some pride in the phylarch's duty. These were zealous Christians, and the implication could easily be that they were proud of defending the frontiers of the Christian Roman Empire against its pagan enemies. It is possible that this Greek term translates Latin *limitaneus*,<sup>382</sup> virtually if not technically, since the *limitanei* were regular Roman soldiers who were citizens. But functionally the *foederati* were also *limitanei*, since the defense of the *limes* was one of their principal duties.

Dakīr: the place in which the inscription was found is also noteworthy. Brünnow<sup>383</sup> collected what nineteenth-century travelers who visited it, including Burckhardt, Wetzstein, and Waddington, had said: it was a ruined village. But when Sejourne visited Dakīr, it evidently was still inhabited, and a good number of Christians were to be found there, as well as some important monuments: "Dakīr, village très habité et autrefois très important: il s'y

<sup>381</sup> ὄρτικός in this sense is not attested in the dictionaries, in the entries on the two related words, ὄρος and ὄριον. It appears as an adjective derived from the latter, not in the sense of "boundary, frontier," but in the astrological sense of a subdivision of a zodiacal sign, appropriated to a planet, as in Ptolemy.

<sup>382</sup> *Limitaneus* is usually not translated but transliterated into Greek, as Procopius does in *Anecdota*, XXIV.13.

<sup>383</sup> See *Die Provincia Arabia*, III, 179. Dussaud has only a line on it in *Topographie*, 373, but it appears on his map II, B.L, opp. p. 24, to the northwest of Hayyāt, where the inscription set up by Flavius Seos was found. On this map it is spelled "Dhekir" and elsewhere "Dhakir."



trouve maintenant un bon nombre de chrétiens. . . . plusieurs monuments importants se voient encore, puis des ornements très soignées; je remarque une superbe frise, et une large dalle avec trois bustes de très belle facture: malheureusement la figure a été mutilée."<sup>384</sup>

It could be concluded from this description of the town, some fifteen centuries after the fall of the Ghassānids, that it was a fairly important center on the eastern edge of Trachonitis (al-Lajā), protected by this Ghassānid phylarch, evidence for the fact that the region flourished in this proto-Byzantine period but deteriorated since it lost its importance after the disappearance of the Ghassānids and the Arabs who had protected it and thus caused it to prosper. This inscription found at Dākīr enables the student of Ghassānid history to return to the list of buildings and cities associated with the Ghassānids in the Arabic sources—to the List of Ḥamza and the *Dīwān* of Ḥassān.<sup>385</sup> It shows that Ḥassān and other sources, such as Yāqūt, have recorded only a fraction of the number of towns associated with the Ghassānids, just as Ḥamza listed only a partial number of their structures. Thus the name of a new Ghassānid phylarch has been added to the list as well as a new Ghassānid locality.

*Postscript:* Maurice Sartre sent me (7 March 1989) photocopies of two new inscriptions that he discovered. I identified them for him as Ghassānid, one involving Ḳātil al-Jū<sup>c</sup> and the other Abū Karib. He dates the first to the year 455/56, which suggests that the Ghassānids were in the service of Byzantium long before Nöldeke thought, a fact suspected by the present writer as early as 1984 in *BAFIC* (see chapter on Amorkesos in the reign of Leo). The two inscriptions are important to federate and Ghassānid history. Indeed, discussion of the inscription discovered by Brünnow at Dākīr is not entirely satisfactory without reference to one of the two new inscriptions. As these have not yet been published (summer 1992), I defer discussing them until they are in print.

#### XVI. THE PATRICIATE OF MUNḌIR

The five Greek inscriptions discussed in the previous section have thrown much light on various aspects of Ghassānid history during the reigns of Justin II and Tiberius. But the light they throw on the ranks and titles of the Ghassānid phylarch deserves special attention. This has been done in great detail for the reign of Arethas,<sup>386</sup> and it is necessary to discuss it now for the reign of Munḍir, in view of the fact that this reign represents the pinnacle of

<sup>384</sup> *Die Provincia Arabia*, III, 179.

<sup>385</sup> For this see *BASIC* II.

<sup>386</sup> For a discussion of these titles, see the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," *BZ* 52 (1959), 321–43, where also the modern literature on the Byzantine titles and ranks is cited. See also idem, "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 288–96; and the section on Arethas' titles, above, 282, 288–97.

power that any federate Arab group reached in the proto-Byzantine period. These ranks and titles have been discussed briefly and intermittently while commenting on the five inscriptions but deserve to be treated together.

Unlike the lengthy reign of his father, Arethas, which lasted for some forty years, Munḍir's reign was cut short, lasting only for a decade or so. The data for examining the question of ranks and titles are relatively few but informative. They consist of two Greek inscriptions and two Syriac sources. As the latter translate Munḍir's titles and ranks from the Greek, it is the former, the Greek, that must be the guide for this discussion.

The patriciate: Munḍir was endowed with the patriciate, and there are references to it throughout the reign in the two sets of sources. The Greek inscription of Hayyāt attests it for the year 578, while the other (al-Burj) is undated.<sup>387</sup> So the question arises when in his reign Munḍir was endowed with the patriciate. For establishing this, the Syriac source is decisive since it is dated and is an official document, containing the signatures of the abbots of the Monophysite monasteries who were responding in connection with the Tritheistic controversy involving Eugenius and Conon. There Munḍir is referred to as *patricius* which, unlike the other two titles, is transliterated, not translated from Greek; hence, unlike one of these two, it admits of no doubt. It solves the problem of when the patriciate was conferred in the course of the nine years that elapsed before its attestation in the Greek inscription, a problem that faced the student of the titles of his father, Arethas, when the patriciate appears attested in 559, in a Greek inscription, thirty years after he became supreme phylarch. The Syriac source<sup>388</sup> for Munḍir decisively dates it to the year 569/70, that is, the first year of his reign. This raises some interesting questions concerning the patriciate and its conferment on high-ranking federate officers.

It is clear from the Syriac source that the patriciate was conferred on Munḍir shortly or immediately after his father Arethas died in 569/70. This may give the impression that Munḍir's patriciate was "inherited" from his father, which, of course, is not true. The *patricii nati* stopped in the reign of Constantine, and the new *dignitas* instituted by him was strictly personal and individual, not hereditary.<sup>389</sup> The strange spectacle that Ghassānid history pre-

<sup>387</sup> For this inscription, see above, 495–501.

<sup>388</sup> On this document, see *BASIC* I.2, 831. The other Syriac source, John of Ephesus, refers to Munḍir many times, but is not helpful on this particular point. Indeed, one of his statements on Munḍir, just before his visit to Constantinople in 580, is rather misleading, since he speaks of how Munḍir was summoned to Constantinople by Tiberius and that he had been endowed with the patriciate. The statement does not say when, and it could imply that this was recent. The other Syriac source, the document containing the signatures of the Monophysite abbots, settles the matter with its reference to Munḍir's patriciate in 569/70, the date of the document.

<sup>389</sup> For the most recent bibliography on the patriciate, see R. W. Mathiesen, "Forty-Three Missing Patricians," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 15 (1990), 87 note 2.

sents—that father and son were both endowed with the patriciate, the one immediately after the death of the other—was a very special case and not the general rule. The new Arab policy instituted by Justinian around 530 turned out to be a great success, and the harvest was reaped in the latter half of the reign of Arethas, when he proved superior to his Lakhmid adversary and killed him in the battle of 554. Peace reigned after that date for some fifteen years during which Arethas appears as a *patricius*<sup>390</sup> in the inscription of 559. So for at least eleven years before his death he was supreme phylarch and *patricius*, the highest *dignitas* that Byzantium was capable of conferring on a barbarian prince. The two went together; witness the short statement in Theophanes describing the visit of Arethas to Constantinople in 563, in which he is described officially and simply as *patricius* and *phylarch*.<sup>391</sup> So when his even more redoubtable son acceded to the supreme phylarchate and kingship in 569/70, it was only natural that he should have been endowed with the patriciate, which went with the *Basileia* and the supreme phylarchate.

Finally, in addition to the fact that the Ghassānid phylarchate had been well established by 569/70 and had demonstrated its worth and fulfilled the expectation of the central government, Mundir himself had been chosen as the crown prince and successor of Arethas when the latter visited Constantinople in 563 to arrange for the succession. So for some seven years Mundir had been crown prince and successor and must have been considered a distinguished phylarch in the service of Byzantium. He therefore must have been endowed with a rank in the hierarchy higher than the clarissimate of the ordinary phylarchs, such as the spectabilate and most probably the gloriosissimate. This is the title that his sons appear to have in his reign, and it was probably the same rank he had enjoyed as crown prince. On his assumption of the supreme phylarchate and kingship in 569/70 immediately after the death of his father, he could only have been endowed with a higher dignity commensurate with the enhancement of his status, and so the patriciate was conferred on him as soon as he acceded. Since it was the highest and most coveted dignity, it was enough to mention it and at times superfluous to include the other titles and ranks. Thus Arethas appears as *patricius* and *phylarchos*,<sup>392</sup> and so does his son Mundir.

The patriciate of Mundir allied him to the empire and the person of the emperor in a most intimate way. The *patricius* was *pater augusti* and was so addressed by the emperor on ceremonial occasions, when according to protocol

<sup>390</sup> See above, 260.

<sup>391</sup> See above, 282.

<sup>392</sup> The first was his honorific title; the second was his military function. And his contemporary Narses was referred to in the West as *patricius et dux in Italia*; see Bury, *HLRE*, II, 283 note 4.

the patricians would have precedence over everybody except the consuls.<sup>393</sup> It allied the Ghassānid phylarch to the other personages in the empire who had that *dignitas*, just as the *nomen gentilicium* Flavius bound him to the person of the emperor, who was also Flavius carrying the *gentilicium* of the Second Flavian dynasty. Thus the Arab federate chief became part of the new aristocracy created by Constantine, an aristocracy dependent not on birth but on service to the state. It was a new order which Constantine instituted and to which even a "barbarian" prince such as Muḍīr could belong. The emotional pull of the dignity of *patricius* on those endowed with it can easily be imagined. In the case of Muḍīr, he was neither a Roman nor a Rhomaios but a federate ally, and so the dignity must have been especially meaningful to him, and he must have been flattered to hear himself addressed as *pater augusti*.<sup>394</sup> The name of Muḍīr may thus be added to the list of patricians in late antiquity, especially as it is missing in an article specifically devoted to them.<sup>395</sup>

Πανεύφημος: this very high Byzantine title was conferred on Muḍīr, and it is indubitably attested not once but twice in two Greek inscriptions. It is the only title that is attested in the Greek sources on Muḍīr. And this raises the question whether this highest title was the only one that was conferred on him, in view of the fact that the contemporary Syriac sources have three different titles applied to him.

The problem is not unlike that raised with regard to the titles and ranks of Arethas, his father, where the chief difficulty consisted in giving the correct

<sup>393</sup> It even outranked the consulate in 537; see Mathiesen, "Patricians," 87.

<sup>394</sup> Muḍīr was probably so addressed on two occasions: when he visited the capital after the reconciliation with Justin II and Tiberius in 575, and also during his visit to Constantinople when he was offered the *īgā* (crown) instead of the *klilā* (coronet/cirlet). The atmosphere of loyalty to the state and the emperor that surrounded the conferment of the patriciate on Muḍīr makes all the more absurd the charge of *prodosia* leveled against him, including the allegation that the Persian king had better rewards for him than the Byzantine *autokrator*.

<sup>395</sup> See Guillard, "Les patrices byzantines," 271–93.

In *BAFIC*, while analyzing the fragment of Malchus on Amorkesos, the adventurous phylarch of the reign of Leo I, I reiterated what I had said in the 1950s, that Leo did not confer the patriciate on Amorkesos when he visited Constantinople in 473. This ran counter to what the Arabic sources say on this Arab phylarch whom they explicitly refer to as *biṭrīq* (*patricius*), a title they do not apply to other Ghassānids. This reference to Amorkesos remains striking, especially as no motive for fabrication can be suspected in his description as *biṭrīq*, which seems to have an authentic ring to it and to be a solid spot in these sources. Since the appearance of *BAFIC*, I have come to the conclusion that the Greek and the Arabic sources can be reconciled. Leo certainly did not confer the patriciate on Amorkesos in 473 (the year before Leo's death). But Amorkesos was only beginning his official career in the service of Rome in that year, and he continued to function as phylarch, serving the interests of Byzantium, possibly for some twenty more years. It is, therefore, not difficult to think that his services to the empire toward the end of his career were rewarded by the patriciate, either by Zeno or early in the reign of Anastasius. This conclusion is not certain, but possible—even probable—and if it turns out to be certain, the name Amorkesos can be added to the list of patricians in the 5th century.

Greek equivalent of a title not transliterated but translated into Syriac.<sup>396</sup> For the reign of Arethas, the problem was more complex since his reign lasted forty years and for the central government was a period of experimentation with the newly conceived and created supreme phylarchate. As a result there was a bewildering variety of titles in Syriac such as *šb<sup>6</sup>bīḥ b<sup>5</sup>-kullā*, *saggi qullāsā*, *m<sup>6</sup>shabbā*, *pē b<sup>5</sup>-rabbūthā*, *myattrūthā*, and it was not easy to discover their Greek equivalents, which ranged as follows: πανεύφημος, ἐνδοξότατος, μεγαλοπρεπέστατος, ὑπερφύεστατος.<sup>397</sup> In the case of Mundir the problem is simpler since the Ghassānid king is endowed (at least in extant sources) with only three Syriac titles, namely, *šb<sup>6</sup>bīḥā*, *m<sup>6</sup>shabbā*, *n<sup>5</sup>šīhā*. For the literary (Syriac)—epigraphic (Greek) confrontation, there is only the Greek title, πανεύφημος, and so the question arises whether or not the three Syriac ones translate one and the same title, πανεύφημος.

No certainty can be predicated for any answers to this question; only possible or probable conclusions may be drawn. The problem is complicated by the fact that the al-Burj inscription where *paneuphemos* appears is undated, unlike the Hayyāt inscription, dated 578. If the former could be dated to the early years of Mundir's reign, such as 570, it would be possible to conclude with some degree of confidence that *paneuphemos* was his title throughout the reign and that these titles all translate *paneuphemos*, or at least two of them, *šb<sup>6</sup>bīḥā* and *m<sup>6</sup>shabbā*, which are two different morphological patterns of one and the same root. Unfortunately there is no way of dating the al-Burj inscription, and one can only draw tentative conclusions after examining the occurrence of these titles in Syriac.

The most noteworthy of these occurrences is the title *šb<sup>6</sup>bīḥā* applied to Mundir because it appears early in the first year of his reign and in an official document, the signatures in the official letter of the Monophysite bishops.<sup>398</sup> It accompanies his patriciate and could suggest that it translates *paneuphemos*, the title that goes with his patriciate in the two Greek inscriptions. But, as has already been noted, one of the inscriptions is late (A.D. 578), while the other is undated, and so it remains uncertain whether *paneuphemos* was conferred on him so early and whether Syriac *šb<sup>6</sup>bīḥā* may translate some other high title.

The Syriac title *mshabbā* appears several times in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of John of Ephesus<sup>399</sup> throughout Mundir's reign, and this raises the question whether it was this title that translated *paneuphemos* attested for him twice,

<sup>396</sup> See "The Patriciate of Arethas," 333–37.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. See also the refinements suggested by Professor Franz Rosenthal to the transliteration of some of these Syriac terms into English in the present writer's *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient*, p. xi, and above, 290 note 86.

<sup>398</sup> See *BASIC* I.2, 831.

<sup>399</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 219, lines 11, 24; p. 224, line 20; p. 262, line 3.

once late in his reign in 578. It is noteworthy that it is related to *sb'biḥā* in its root, which means *gloria*, but it is the intensive form. This could imply that it is the higher rank but not necessarily, as, curiously enough, ἔνδοξος (*gloriosus*) was deemed higher than ἔνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*) since it was applied only to the *autokrator*.<sup>400</sup>

John of Ephesus applies to Mundir, in addition to the two preceding titles, *n'ṣiḥā* twice.<sup>401</sup> This raises the question of whether or not the ecclesiastical historian was using the term as a literary locution or a technical term and if the latter, in what sense. Syriac *n'ṣiḥā* can mean "brilliant, glorious," or "victorious, triumphant." The term is also applied to Maurice<sup>402</sup> as *magister militum*, and this presents further difficulties for determining its meaning. Although the meaning "victorious" is especially applicable to Mundir because of his outstanding military record so well described by John of Ephesus himself, the chances are that Syriac *n'ṣiḥā* does not have this signification, which would approach the imperial one νικήτης, but that it is allied to the two preceding terms applied to Mundir, a synonym expressing the same concept but derived from another Syriac root.

As two of these three Syriac terms are related, and as the third is most probably a synonym of either, it is possible that the Syriac terms express one and the same Greek title, πανεύφημος. This could derive support from the fact that the two Greek inscriptions know of no other title, and the fact that Mundir started from the top, unlike his father, Arethas, on whom Byzantium experimented in the matter of conferring titles for some forty years. Mundir appears as king and *patricius* from the beginning, now that the phylarchate had been established and he had been crown prince and successor for some seven years. Πανεύφημος is thus the title of the supreme phylarch, and this is clinched by the application of ἔνδοξότατος (*gloriosissimus*) to his sons in one and the same inscription. This could yield the conclusion that the federate phylarchal hierarchy of ranks and titles presents a pyramidal shape, at the apex of which stood the supreme phylarch Mundir, *patricius* and *paneuphemos*, then his own sons, distinguished phylarchs with the title or rank of *endoxotatoi* (*gloriosissimi*), and finally come minor phylarchs—Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid—with the titles of *peribleptoi* (*spectabiles*) and *lamprotatoi* (*clarissimi*).

Φιλόχριστος: in addition to *patricius* and πανεύφημος, the Syriac source has another title for Mundir, *rāhem l' mashīhā*, a title his father<sup>403</sup> also had. This appears in a Syriac source, and a Monophysite one at that. It appears in

<sup>400</sup> As already noted by Nöldeke, *GF*, 15 note 1; see also Rösch, *ONOMA*, 44–45.

<sup>401</sup> See John of Ephesus, *HE*, textus, p. 220, line 6; p. 221, line 19.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 309, line 30, when Maurice was sent by Tiberius as commander-in-chief of the Byzantine forces in the Orient. Brooks translates it as applied to Maurice as *illustris*: *HE*, versio, p. 235, line 9.

<sup>403</sup> As already noted by Nöldeke, *GF*, 14.



the signatures of the letters the Monophysite abbots wrote in connection with the Tritheistic heresy of Eugenius and Conon.<sup>404</sup> Mundir succeeded his father not only as the supreme phylarch of Byzantium in Oriens but also as the protector of the Monophysite church in the region. Hence that *ecclesia* accorded him what it had accorded his father, the title of φιλόχριστος. In so doing, the Monophysite *ecclesia* allied the Ghassānid king to the *basileus* in Constantinople who, too, had φιλόχριστος in his imperial titulature.<sup>405</sup>

Thus the ranks and titles of Mundir had many elements, which may be briefly identified. (1) king, *basileus*: a twice-crowned king first with *klilā*, then with *tāgā*; he was king primarily and preeminently to his own people and to the non-Roman world, to which the kings belonged. (2) φιλόχριστος (Christ-loving): this was conferred on him by a grateful Monophysite church for his role as its protector. (3) *patricius*: the highest dignity conferred on him by Byzantium on his succession to the *Basileia* and supreme phylarchate. (4) πανεύφημος: the title conferred on him by the emperor; it was the highest and went with *patricius*. (5) Flavius, the *gentilicium*, too, was part of his titulature, although it is not clear whether he assumed it himself as an expression of loyalty to the emperor or had it conferred on him as an act of appreciation and esteem by the emperor. (6) Finally, he was phylarch for Byzantium, and this simple word reflected his essential function.<sup>406</sup>

Although in the world of the barbarians outside the *limes* and to his own people, his highest title was that of king, *malik*, in the world of Byzantium and within the *limes*, his official function was phylarch, while the most important honorific title was *patricius*. Hence the reference to himself in the al-Burj inscription as *phylarchos*; but in order to distinguish him from many other phylarchs, small and not so small, the title *patricius* also appears with phylarch, the one that assigned him to the new Byzantine aristocracy. Thus patrician and phylarch represent the essential Mundir, as they had represented his father, Arethas, before him.<sup>407</sup>

## APPENDIX I

### The Two Federate Crowns

#### A

Ch. Clermont-Ganneau wrote on the "coronation" of the Ghassānid Mundir in his "Le *tadj-dār* Imrou'l-Qais et la royauté générale des arabes"<sup>1</sup> as an "investiture royale à la

<sup>404</sup> On this document, see *BASIC* I.2, 815.

<sup>405</sup> On this title, see Rösch, *ONOMA*, 55, and the most detailed treatment of it in O. Kresten, "Iustinianos I. Der 'Christusliebende' Kaiser," *Römische Mitteilungen* (1979), 83–109.

<sup>406</sup> It is curious that a term for the supreme phylarch, such as *archiphylarchos*, was not used to distinguish him from other phylarchs.

<sup>407</sup> As in 563, when he visited the capital, as recounted by Theophanes; see above, 282.

<sup>1</sup> See *Recueil d'archéologie orientale* 7 (1906), 169.

mode perse." This was almost a century ago! His views have led E. Chrysos to take up this view some seventy years later in his article "The Title ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ,"<sup>2</sup> in which he argues that the crown conferred on Mundir was in response to that conferred on the Lakhmid king Nu'mān "most probably in 580." As the detailed examination of the crown given Mundir by Tiberius in 580 undertaken in this chapter has shown, this is a view that cannot be accepted, and other explanations have been given to the significance of the Ghassānid crown. It should be remembered that since 554 the Ghassānids were in the ascendant vis-à-vis the Lakhmids; it was beneath them to think of the Lakhmid Nu'mān and the Ghassānid Mundir in terms of equality, and so it is impossible to believe that Mundir would have suggested or accepted a crown as a counterbalance to that given by the Persian king to Nu'mān, whose capital, Ḥīra, the former had captured and burned.

Furthermore, the date of the "coronation" of the Lakhmid king is far from certain and is only approximately dated ca. 580, while that of Mundir is precisely dated by John of Ephesus: the winter of 580, shortly before 2 March. This reflects the precarious nature of the argument, for if a firm dating turns up for Nu'mān's coronation, later than the winter of 580, then the argument breaks down completely on chronological grounds. Even without the benefit of the future emergence of a firm dating for the coronation of Lakhmid Nu'mān, it is possible to argue that it did not take place before that of Mundir. The journey from Nisibis to Constantinople took 103 days.<sup>3</sup> For the news of the coronation of Nu'mān in Ctesiphon to reach Constantinople, for Constantinople to write to Antioch about crowning Mundir, and for Mundir to travel to Constantinople to receive the crown, this would have taken at least some ten months, which could place the coronation of Nu'mān early in 579. This would withdraw the inception of his reign to the late 570s. Although the date given for its inception is ca. 580, yet the chances are that it was either in 580 or in the early 580s. Nu'mān, according to Hishām al-Kalbī,<sup>4</sup> ruled for twenty-two years, and the end of the reign<sup>5</sup> has been dated 602. So the argument is fragile, even on chronological grounds. But it was an intelligent observation on the part of Chrysos, which had not been made before.<sup>6</sup>

## B

Revisiting the two passages in John of Biclar and in John of Ephesus a hundred years after Nöldeke had examined them has resulted in some gains that have been pointed out above in the section on the Ghassānid crown.<sup>7</sup> Three more observations may be

<sup>2</sup> See *DOP* 32 (1978), 50–51.

<sup>3</sup> See *De ceremoniis* (Bonn ed.), I, 400.

<sup>4</sup> On the duration of the reign of Nu'mān, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 53 note 17.

<sup>5</sup> See L. Vecchia Vaglieri, in *El*<sup>2</sup>, II, 241, s.v. *Dhū Ḳār*, where she gives also the year 605 as the end of his reign, calculated by Caetani. According to the latter reckoning, Nu'mān would have started his reign in 583.

<sup>6</sup> Incidentally the account of the coronation of Nu'mān in Chrysos' article (p. 51) contains some *lapsus calami*. The value of the crown was not 6,000, but 60,000 dirhams: see Rothstein, *DLH*, 128, and Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 195. For "Dirhen" in Chrysos' article read "Dirham" (Greek *drachma*), the Arabic and Islamic form of the monetary unit.

<sup>7</sup> See above, 398–406.

added. (1) The fact that Mundir received two crowns from Tiberius on two different occasions with the possibility of a double investiture must be adjudged unique. Apparently there is no record of a similar transaction in Byzantine history.<sup>8</sup> (2) The investiture of Mundir, whether single or double, reflects the essential unity of imperial techniques in granting honors to client-kings in the East and in the West, with one important difference: that *appellatio regis* granted to those of the East was denied to those of the West, the Germanic kings who had conquered Roman territories, for fear that it would prejudice imperial claims to those territories. The Germans received the *insignia* of kingship but were denied the *appellatio regis*.<sup>9</sup> (3) The two coronations of Mundir by Tiberius suggest that the Byzantine *autokrator* was still functioning as kingmaker in the last quarter of the sixth century.

## C

John of Ephesus spoke only in very general terms of the royal robes and *insignia* with which Mundir was endowed on his second coronation, but it is possible to recover the details from the descriptions that have survived of those which the Armenians and the Mauri were granted by the Byzantine *autokrators*. The Ghassānid robes and *insignia* may not have been identical with the Armenian and the Mauric ones, but must have borne a certain resemblance to these as described by Procopius, while speaking of the reign of Justinian in *Buildings*, III.i.17–23 and in *History*, III.xxv.4–8. These two passages are of considerable interest for filling gaps in our knowledge of the Ghassānid federate royal robes and *insignia*, giving a vivid picture of what the Ghassānid kings must have looked like on ceremonial occasions.

The passage on the Armenian satraps in the *Buildings* (Loeb) reads as follows:

It is worth while to describe these *insignia*, for they will never again be seen by man. There is a cloak made of wool, not such as is produced by sheep, but gathered from the sea. *Pinnos* the creature is called on which this wool grows. And the part where the purple should have been, that is, where the insertion of purple cloth is usually made, is overlaid with gold. The cloak was fastened by a golden brooch in the middle of which was a precious stone from which hung three sapphires by loose golden chains. There was a tunic of silk adorned in every part with decorations of gold which they are wont to call *plumia*. The boots were of red colour and reached to the knee, of the sort which only the Roman Emperor and the Persian King are permitted to wear.

The passage on the Mauric chiefs in the *History* (Loeb) reads as follows:

Now these symbols are a staff of silver covered with gold, and a silver cap,—not covering the whole head, but like a crown and held in place on all sides by bands of silver,—a kind of white cloak gathered by a golden brooch on the right

<sup>8</sup> I owe this observation to Michael McCormick, who chaired the session at which I read a paper on the *insignia* of the Byzantine client-kings (Byzantine Studies Conference, Baltimore, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> See the very long note in B. Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians* (Berlin, 1960), I, 276–78 note 829. Theodoric received the *insignia*, but was denied *appellatio regis*.

shoulder in the form of a Thessalian cape, and a white tunic with embroidery, and a gilded boot.

## APPENDIX II

## Nöldeke on the Titles and Ranks of Mundir

The difficulties of finding the correct Greek equivalents of the Syriac translations of Byzantine ranks and titles have been noted in the course of this chapter. Nöldeke was the first to grapple firmly with the frustrating task, and he acquitted himself remarkably well.<sup>1</sup> Some oversights and inaccuracies have been noted in connection with the ranks and titles of Arethas.<sup>2</sup> A few observations will be made here for the reign of Mundir, which witnessed the summit of the assimilation of the Arab federate aristocracy into the Byzantine system.

In the few paragraphs that Nöldeke wrote on the titles and ranks of Arethas and Mundir, he seems to have equated the titles of one with the other.<sup>3</sup> This is roughly true but not quite accurate; the son rose even higher than the father in the Byzantine *cursus honorum*, since he started from the top, as has been said earlier. This is reflected clearly in (1) his assumption of the patriciate at the very beginning of the year that he succeeded his father, 569/70; and (2) in the higher-grade *Basileia* (kingship) with which he was endowed by Tiberius, who gave him a *tāgā*, a royal diadem, instead of the *klilā*, the circlet worn by previous Arab federate kings.

In view of this, one would expect Mundir's ranks and titles to be at least slightly different from those of his father. And yet Nöldeke apparently thought that they were the same. His views involve the two terms *πανεύφημος* and *ἔνδοξότατος*. Nöldeke thought that one of the Syriac terms, *sh' biḥ b' -kullā*, applied to Arethas, could be translated *πανεύφημος*, which he thus gives to Arethas, while in the same paragraph<sup>4</sup> he gives his son Mundir the title *ἔνδοξότατος*, which he thinks is the equivalent of Syriac *m' shabbhā*, applied to Mundir.

This is a reversal of what Greek epigraphy says on the matter. *Πανεύφημος* is not applied to Arethas in any Greek inscription, while *ἔνδοξότατος* is never applied to Mundir. Nöldeke is aware of these inscriptions, but nevertheless he seems to have disregarded the testimony of Greek epigraphy,<sup>5</sup> the clear guide. That *endoxotatos* was, or came to be, lower than *paneuphemos* is clearly reflected in the al-Burj inscription where Mundir is described as *paneuphemos*, while his sons are *endoxotatoi*. So to speak of Mundir as *endoxotatos* is to disregard both the firmest evidence that is available on these two terms and their relation to each other and also the fact that Mundir rose even higher than his father in the Byzantine hierarchical system.

<sup>1</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 12–16.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Patriciate of Arethas," 333–39, 341–43.

<sup>3</sup> See *GF*, esp. pp. 13–14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Some thirty years ago I thought that Arethas could have been *πανεύφημος*, which I considered the equivalent of the Syriac *saggi qullāsā*, in support of Nöldeke's position at one time; I also wrote, of the attempt to discover the correct Greek equivalent: "But all the rules of probability can break down in attempts of this kind"; see "The Patriciate of Arethas," 335–37.

Nöldeke noted that *Mundir* was described by John of Ephesus also as *n<sup>c</sup>šihā*,<sup>6</sup> but it is not clear what he thought of this title, as he translated it "der treffliche *Mundhir*" (*Mundir*, the excellent or admirable). He is unaware that this was also the title applied to Maurice, appointed by Tiberius *magister militum per Orientem*, where it is possibly a technical term.<sup>7</sup> However, as has been argued above, the term applied to *Mundir* related to the two other Syriac terms as a synonym. At the root of all these difficulties lies the fact that the root *sh-b-h* in Syriac, which means *gloria*, has provided three derivatives—*sh<sup>c</sup>bihā*, *m<sup>c</sup>shabhā*, and *sh<sup>c</sup>bih b<sup>c</sup>-kullā*—and these became the commonest of all Syriac terms for the Byzantine titles; so it is difficult to say which Greek ones they translate, especially as they are used sometimes interchangeably for one and the same Ghassānid phylarch.

Greek epigraphy must therefore be the guide in this matter. *Paneuphemos* appears twice in it for *Mundir*, and one must therefore conclude that this is the highest rank that a Ghassānid attained. A distinction drawn in the discussion of titles between *Ehrenprädikat* and *Rangprädikat* may be drawn upon here.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps *paneuphemos* belonged to the former. *Mundir*, who was king and *patricius*, did not need any *Rangprädikat*, reserved for other phylarchs. Only *paneuphemos* was applied to him as an *Ehrenprädikat*, since the application of other titles to him was superfluous.

### APPENDIX III

#### Flavius Seos, *Epitropos*

In addition to what has been said on the interpretation of *epitropos*, the key word in the Hayyāt inscription, the following observations may be made in relation to H. G. Butler's account of the courtyard erected by Seos, *epitropos*.<sup>1</sup> Butler understood the term to mean "procurator." This interpretation of the term cannot be accepted for a variety of reasons.

1. *Epitropos* can indeed mean "procurator," as is clear from the lexica. But when it does mean that, it is invariably followed by the genitive case, which specifies the relation of the procurator to something or someone, such as the emperor.<sup>2</sup> Butler, who was heavily involved in the inscriptions of the Princeton Archaeological Expedition to Syria, and indeed was the author of a whole volume on architecture, must have been influenced by the occurrence of the term in two Greek inscriptions where τῷ Σεβαστοῦ, that is, the emperor, follows in the genitive case.<sup>3</sup>

2. Butler apparently was unaware of Nöldeke's notice of the inscription, where he discussed it in relation to the Ghassānid phylarchate. Although Nöldeke made some mistakes in interpretation, his views on *epitropos* are noteworthy. Instead of

<sup>6</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 14 note 3.

<sup>7</sup> The Syriac term means "victorious," in addition to what Nöldeke says, and as applied to Maurice, it possibly reflected his official title.

<sup>8</sup> On the distinction, drawn by O. Hornickel, see "The Patriciate of Arethas," 327 note 20, 335 note 52.

<sup>1</sup> See above, 489–92.

<sup>2</sup> Especially helpful is the entry ἐπίτροπος, in Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyriuskunden*, III, 117–18.

<sup>3</sup> See PPUAES, Division III, Section A, nos. 655 and 655<sup>1</sup>.

referring to these, Butler referred to the commentary of Waddington on Mundir, which depended on Caussin de Perceval's work,<sup>4</sup> made utterly out of date by Nöldeke's classic on the Ghassānids. Butler was unable to understand the relation, or possible relation, of Seos to the Ghassānid Mundir.

3. Hayyāt is in the Provincia Arabia. If Seos was its procurator, as its provincial governor, he would have been mentioned in the list<sup>5</sup> of Arabia's governors, but the list does not show him as governor, and the novel on Arabia of the year 536 speaks not of an *epitropos* but of a *moderator* as the civil governor of the province.<sup>6</sup> The only meaning that may be given to *epitropos*, related to the Roman procuratorship, is possibly that of a financial officer, which the procurator normally was. And Seos could have been some such local official in Arabia. But the use of "procurator" by Butler is unfortunate since it has implications that are irrelevant in the context of this inscription.<sup>7</sup> So Nöldeke's perception of Seos' function is a safer guide.

The volume of Greek and Latin inscriptions of the Princeton Archaeological Expedition provides material for some observations on the name Seos Olbanou, Seos son of Olbanos. The name Seos, surprisingly enough, is common in these inscriptions.<sup>8</sup> It is attested twelve times in various orthographies and is invariably transliterated in the volume as Shai' (Shay'), one of the interpretations given in this chapter; but others have also been suggested.

The patronymic of Seos, involving the name Olbanos, has been interpreted in this chapter as the Arabic name 'Ulḅān, on the morphological pattern *fu'lān*.<sup>9</sup> The Greek inscriptions of the region have the Latin name Ulpianus attested five times, thrice as Οὐλιπιανός and twice as Ὀλιπιανός,<sup>10</sup> which could suggest that Olbanos of the Hayyāt inscription is Latin Ulpianus. But this is unlikely since the orthography is quite different. Besides, the Hayyāt inscription is a Greek one, not a Semitic one where the name might have experienced some consonantal and vocalic changes. So, if the father of Seos was Ulpianus, his name would have been correctly spelled.

The occurrence of the name Ulpianus in these five inscriptions is noteworthy. Their bearers are Arabs whose sons carry resoundingly Arab names. The five attestations of this Latin name in this region may be accounted for by the fact that it may go back to Trajanic times. The father of the emperor, Marcus Ulpius Traianus, commanded *legio Fretensis* in the Jewish War, A.D. 67–68, and was governor of Syria ca.

<sup>4</sup> See *ibid.*, Division II, Section A, p. 363 note 1.

<sup>5</sup> For the list, see Sartre, *TE*, 100–120.

<sup>6</sup> On this see above, 196–98.

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, it is unlikely that if Seos was a procurator, he would have included reference to his son in the inscription. So the probabilities are in favor of giving *epitropos* a non-technical meaning, related to the work of construction itself, and possibly assigning to the term its literal meaning, one to whom the charge of anything is entrusted, "steward, trustee, administrator," as in Liddell and Scott.

<sup>8</sup> See PPUAES, Division II, Section B, index, p. 463, s.v.

<sup>9</sup> The root, however, from which it derives, is not clear; it could be 'l-b; κώμη Ὀλβανῶν is understood to be Arabic Ḥalban in *IGLSYR*, IV, p. 314. For the root 'l-b in some Arabic names, see Lankester Harding, *Concordance*, 430. However, the names that derive from it are very rare in Arabic, such as 'Ilbā' and 'Ilba.

<sup>10</sup> PPUAES, index, p. 462, s.v.



A.D. 75–76. The emperor, also called Marcus Ulpius Traianus, accompanied his father to Syria ca. A.D. 75, during the latter's governorship. It is also noteworthy that the famous jurist of Roman times, Ulpian, was born in the region, in Tyre in Phoenicia. The rarity of Olbanos/<sup>f</sup>Ulbān in Arabic, and the uncertainty that attends the exact root from which it is derived, suggest that it may be an Arabicization of the Latin Ulpianus. Arabic *Zaynab*/*Zenobia* could be a parallel. The Arabic-sounding name *Zaynab* is simply an adaptation of a Greek name.

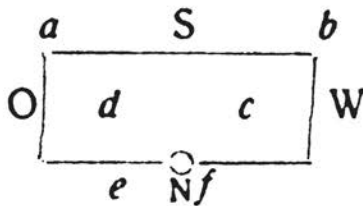
## APPENDIX IV

J. G. Wetzstein and R. Brünnow on al-Burj

## A

Wetzstein saw the al-Burj inscription as early as 1858, copied it, and drew a plan of the structure.<sup>1</sup> According to him, the castle of al-Burj consisted of two large chambers: one for men, which he called *Maq'ad*, and another for women, which he called *Muḥarram*. The partition wall between the two chambers he called al-*Sāḥa*. The tower was on the north side of the castle, which, according to him, had the shape of a nomadic pavilion or tent: "Es hatte die Gestalt des Nomadenzeltes: war von *a*–*b* 180 Schritte lang, *c* war das *Muḥarram*, oder der von den Weibern bewohnte Theil des Hauses und *d* das *Maq'ad*, wo sich die Männer aufhalten und Gäste empfangen werden. Die Scheidewand zwischen beiden heisst die *Sāḥa*; *e* war das Portal, *f* wohl der Wachturm, seine Mauer war 14 Fuss dick."<sup>2</sup>

The plan he drew for the castle is reproduced here, enlarged from the sketch in Brünnow and Domaszewski.<sup>3</sup>



It is not clear whether Wetzstein's descriptions of the two chambers *d* and *c* rest on inferences on his part or solid and firm facts that entailed drawing these conclusions, especially his saying that chamber *c* was a *Muḥarram* for women. The two chambers may have served entirely different functions, possibly the reception of chiefs and military figures related to the defense of the *limes*, in much the same way that the

<sup>1</sup> The old work of Wetzstein, *Reisebericht über Hauran und die Trachonen* (Berlin, 1860), is unavailable to me, and I know it through quotations and references in the works of Waddington and in Brünnow-Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, III, from which the quotations in this Appendix are taken.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Provincia Arabia*, III, 200.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

other structure erected by Muḍīr outside Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) was a *praetorium extra muros* for Muḍīr to receive visitors.

Wetzstein visited the region before serious research on the Ghassānids was published, and he was probably influenced in his view of this Ghassānid structure by the romantic perception that depicted them as nomads. Hence his description of the structure as one that had the shape of a *Nomadenzelt*. Furthermore, his division of the structure into what he called a "Muḥarram" and a "Maq'ad," even if true, does not argue for the nomadism of the builder of the structure. The separation of men's quarters from those of the women was common in Islamic times for sedentaries until the late Ottoman period, and it still obtains in conservative circles in the Arab and Muslim world of sedentaries, the *haremlik* and the *selamlık* of Ottoman times. As has been explained on various occasions in this volume, the Ghassānids were certainly not nomads. Wetzstein's idiom, which suggests this, is unfortunate. His "beduinization" of the Ghassānids may have misled Brünnow in what he wrote on this structure.

## B

Rudolph Brünnow visited the site as part of the journey he and Alfred von Domaszewski made to the Provincia Arabia in 1897–98. He was able to see al-Burj, the Ghassānid castle, within the larger complex of the military establishment around Ḍumayr<sup>4</sup> with its Roman temple and military camp. His description of the tower and its measurements is as follows:

Der allein leidlich erhaltene Turm ist ca. 8.00 hoch und etwa 10.00 im Durchmesser; der innere kreisrunde Raum von 3.70 Durchmesser ist zur äußeren Rundung excentrisch gestellt, und zwar nach Norden zu, so daß die über 5.00 betragende größte Mauerstärke sich an der Südseite befand (Fig. 1095). Der Turm ist offenbar mit den schönen Kalksteinquadern der Lagertürme erbaut worden, die fast genau denselben Durchmesser haben; daneben sind Basaltquader und Säulenfragmente verwendet.<sup>5</sup>

The ground plan of the tower that Brünnow presented is reproduced here.<sup>6</sup>

Although Brünnow has enabled the student of the Ghassānid presence in the region to analyze it and relate it to the larger Byzantine military complex, the last paragraph of his chapter on al-Burj is startling. He argued that because the south side of the tower lies within the fortress, one could conclude that the tower had already existed earlier and that Muḍīr built only the chambers: "Aus dem Umstande, daß die wegen ihrer größeren Mauerstärke besonders zur Verteidigung bestimmte Südseite des Turmes auf dem Grundriß Wetzsteins innerhalb des Schloßchens zu liegen kommt, könnte man schließen, daß der Turm schon früher als Wartturm vorhanden war und daß el-Muḍīr nur die übrigen Gemächer daran gebaut hätte."<sup>7</sup>

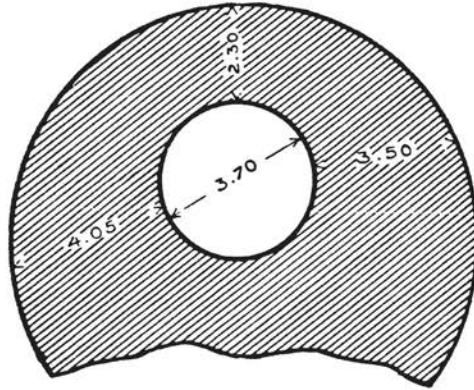
This is difficult, perhaps impossible, to accept. In so reasoning, Brünnow was influenced by Wetzstein's view of the shape of the structure and the two chambers as

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 181–99.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



*Nomadenzelt* and also by the view of the Ghassānids as a semi-nomadic group. Although, unlike Wetzstein, he wrote after Nöldeke had published his monograph on the Ghassānids, he was influenced by the latter's views, which so often assigned them to nomadism. He was also influenced by Theophylact Simocatta's prejudiced view of the Ghassānids, without realizing the point of view from which the latter wrote.<sup>8</sup> Hence Brünnow was inclined to think that the "semi-nomadic" Muṇḍir would have built the two chambers, the *Nomadenzelt*, rather than the military tower which by implication he assigns to the Byzantines.<sup>9</sup>

The true guide to who built the tower is the inscription, set up by the builder himself, Muṇḍir, who expressly states that he built this tower. It is impossible to believe that the Muṇḍir who expresses strong religious sentiments in the inscription, and who expressly states that he built the tower, would not be speaking the truth. A more impressive edifice was built by him outside the walls of Sergiopolis, the *praetorium extra muros*, and it invalidates Brünnow's conclusions influenced by the jaundiced view of the Ghassānids as nomads. Apparently Muṇḍir's *praetorium* outside Sergiopolis was unknown to Brünnow,<sup>10</sup> as was the tower built by his father, Arethas, at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī.<sup>11</sup>

#### APPENDIX V

##### R. Mouterde on Nuṣmān

The volumes of *IGLSYR* are standard works on the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Syria, and all students of this region are grateful to the two scholars who have per-

<sup>8</sup> See *ibid.*, II, 174 note 1, which quotes Theophylact on this point. On the prejudice of Theophylact against the Arabs and the Ghassānids in particular, see below, 594–97.

<sup>9</sup> Although he assigned to Muṇḍir the building of al-Mushattā palace in Trans-Jordan (*ibid.*, III, 174–75); but he argued that Muṇḍir could be credited with its building only because he must have received money and technical assistance for the building from Emperor Tiberius!

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 175 note 1.

<sup>11</sup> On this see above, 258.

formed this monumental task. Therefore the inadequate commentary<sup>1</sup> on the inscription that deals with Nu'mān (IV 1550) is surprising and admits of the following observations. The Nu'mān in question whom this bronze plaque commemorates in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, so deep in Oriens and in an inscription written in Greek, could only have been the Ghassānid, not the Lakhmid Nu'mān who moved in the orbit of Persia. And yet, of the two paragraphs that make up the commentary, the first and longer one is unnecessarily devoted to saying that the Nu'mān in question was not the Lakhmid (with full documentation!).

The paragraph devoted to the Ghassānid is a strange collection of misapprehensions of Ghassānid history. Mouterde chose to understand the inscription as belonging to the period when Nu'mān rebelled against Byzantium in his attempt to avenge the arrest of his father. In so saying, he clearly was influenced by two writers who were no friends of the Ghassānids, R. Devresse and P. Goubert,<sup>2</sup> and he added to them the testimony of John Moschus, who recorded raids during the rebellion of Nu'mān. This interpretation of the inscription has to be totally rejected.

Who, after raising the standard of revolt against Byzantium, would have inscribed on a plaque in Greek the titles and ranks accorded him by Byzantium instead of rejecting the Byzantine connection? Furthermore, the bronze plaque was found not in the limitrophe or the eastern desert but in Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, not far from the Orontes in Syria. But if this had been inscribed during Nu'mān's rebellion, it would not have been found at Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān, since Nu'mān and his Ghassānids withdrew to the outer desert during their rebellion whence they attacked Roman territory along the *limes*.

Instead of quoting John of Ephesus when the latter described the visit of Mundir and his sons to Constantinople, the appropriate background for the conferment of such honors as mentioned in the inscription, Mouterde chose to quote John of Ephesus on the rebellion and added a quotation from John Moschus. This cannot be the background for such an inscription. He further goes on to say that Nu'mān actually usurped the title and rank and conferred it on himself when he took the place of his father after the latter's arrest. A Nu'mān rebellious against Byzantium would not have acted thus; it would have been more consonant with his rebellion to reject any vestiges of the Byzantine connection. Besides, this view is invalidated by the Burj inscription, which presents Nu'mān as *gloriosissimus*.

A sober view of this inscription, however, was taken by C. Mondésert, who, working on this inscription in connection with another concerning a cameleer of the shrine of St. Sergius, came to the conclusion that the cameleer could have been in the employ of the Nu'mān of this inscription, who was ensuring the safety of provisions reaching Sergiopolis. The conclusion on the provisioning of Sergiopolis and caring for its safety by Nu'mān may not be necessarily true, but at least the implication in Mondésert's reasoning is that Nu'mān was not yet a rebellious chief but was still in the service of Rome, a fact that is clear from the inscriptions.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The commentary is on p. 177; see also the equally surprising commentary on another Greek inscription outside the walls of Anasarthā, discussed in *BAFOC*, 227–38.

<sup>2</sup> Instead of being guided by T. Nöldeke and E. Stein on this Ghassānid.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 505–7.

## APPENDIX VI

## The στρατηλασία of Nu'mān

J. Durliat distinguished the five true *magistri militum* (στρατηλάται) of Byzantium from those that were not but were so described with considerable latitude, such as the dukes and tribunes, and he provided a useful table in which these *stratēlatētai* were categorized.<sup>1</sup>

Nu'mān's *stratēlasia* may now be added to the list of attestations of the term that Durliat assembled from marginal regions, esoteric sources, inscriptions, and papyri. It comes from Syria Secunda found on a bronze plaque.<sup>2</sup> The Ghassānid commander appears in the inscription as *stratēlatēs* without any qualification after this title, which, however, is preceded by *endoxotatos*. Nu'mān was neither a duke nor a tribune. Hence he represents a new category to which the term *stratēlatēs* was applied, namely, phylarch, which follows *stratēlatēs* in the inscription.

As has been indicated earlier in this chapter, the title was possibly honorific.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand it could have been more than that, reflecting the new Byzantine perception of the Ghassānid contingent in the army of Oriens, not as a group of unruly Arabian pastoralists commanded by tribal chiefs but as one trained and disciplined in the Roman manner, which deserved to be commanded by an officer that enjoyed the high Byzantine title of *stratēlatēs*, the commander of regular Byzantine *stratiōtai*. This perception was not unjustified by the performance record of the Ghassānids throughout the century, the climax of which was reached in this period, the reign of Mundir. Whatever the truth about this title of Nu'mān's may turn out to be, *stratēlatēs* represents the progress made by the Ghassānid phylarchs in scaling the Byzantine military ladder to its highest rung and their close assimilation to the Byzantine military system. In this respect, *stratēlatēs*, the military term, balances the term *patricius*, the non-military dignity that the Ghassānids were also endowed with.

<sup>1</sup> See his "Magister Militum—ΣΤΡΑΤΗΛΑΤΗΣ dans l'empire byzantin (VIe-VIIe siècles)," *BZ* 72 (1979), 306-20; for the table, see p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> See above, 505-6.

<sup>3</sup> See above, 506.

## VI

### The Reign of Maurice (582–602)

The sudden death of Magnus was followed by the death of Tiberius shortly after in 582. Thus the Ghassānids might have looked forward to a change in imperial policy, but unfortunately for them the two deaths were followed by the elevation to the purple of their inveterate enemy, Maurice. He was a Chalcedonian emperor who wanted no truck with Monophysitism and who was motivated by personal animosity toward their king Muḏīr, whose arrest he finally brought about. The reign turned out to be disastrous for Ghassānid-Byzantine relations and also crucial for Byzantine history in the proto-Byzantine period, for during it were sown the seeds of the two major conflicts of the reign of Heraclius, those with the Persians and the Arabs. This chapter will discuss the journey of Nu'mān, Muḏīr's son, to Constantinople to negotiate the release of his father; the failure of these negotiations and the detention of Nu'mān for years in Constantinople; the exile of Muḏīr to Sicily; the temporary dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate; the role of the Arab *foederati* in the Persian wars of the reign; the restoration of the Ghassānids; and the efforts to bring Muḏīr back from Sicily, involving the mediation of Pope Gregory. In addition, the chapter will discuss the image of the Ghassānids in two sets of sources: the Syriac, represented by John of Ephesus, the historian of the Ghassānid dynasty; and the Greek, represented by Evagrius, Theophylact, and Moschus. It ends with an evaluation of the controversial reign.

#### I. MAURICE AND NU'MĀN

Just as the accession of Maurice further dimmed the prospects for Muḏīr, so it did for his son Nu'mān who, on the death of Magnus, decided to go to Constantinople in the hope of resolving Byzantine-Ghassānid differences, but instead ended up with a trial for treason and a lengthy detention in Constantinople.

#### A

Maurice's encounter with Nu'mān in Constantinople immediately after he became emperor was described by John of Ephesus in chapter 56 of Book



III, but only the title<sup>1</sup> of the chapter has survived. Epitomes of it appear in Michael the Syrian and other Syriac chronicles<sup>2</sup> that describe how Nu'mān made the journey to the capital, where Maurice asked him to resume the fight against Persia and bargained with him about the release of his father and his accepting the Chalcedonian position, which Nu'mān refused. While on his way back to Oriens, he was arrested and brought back to Constantinople:

Magnus, homme scélérat et très méchant, mourut ensuite. Alors Na'man prit sur lui-même de monter trouver le César Mauricianus. Celui-ci l'accueillit et lui jura que s'il combattait contre les Perses, il délivrerait son père de l'exil.

On dit à Na'man de communiquer avec les Synodites. Il s'y refusa en disant: "Toutes les tribus des Ṭaiyayê sont orthodoxes; et si je communique avec les Synodites, ils me tueront".—A cause de cela, sa haine s'accrut, et, en partant, Na'man jura qu'il ne verrait plus volontairement le visage des Romains. C'est pourquoi, tandis qu'il était en route, on s'empara de lui et on l'envoya en exil, avec Mondar son père.<sup>3</sup>

1. The first problem that this account raises is the identity of the emperor whom Nu'mān dealt with in Constantinople—Tiberius or Maurice.<sup>4</sup> It is clear from the epitome and the reference in the chapter on Nu'mān in Evagrius that it was the latter. The chapter in John of Ephesus has been lost, but the epitomators, Michael the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus, had read it and both speak of the encounter taking place with Maurice; it must be assumed that they understood John of Ephesus correctly when they had his full text before them. The encounter must have taken place early in the first part of Maurice's reign. Moreover, Nu'mān is unlikely to have gone to Tiberius, in whose reign occurred the arrest of his father and then his own revolt, which made him an outlaw in the eyes of the emperor.<sup>5</sup> In spite of Maurice's hostility, Nu'mān probably thought that the change of rulers might signal a change of policy toward the Ghassānid dynasty and an opportunity to better the situation that had obtained during the reign of Tiberius, which could not have been worse. From the epitome it is clear that the journey to Constantinople came immediately after the death of Magnus, and the sequence suggests even

<sup>1</sup> See *HE*, p. 88, line 4: "De Na'man filii Mondir ad urbem regiam adventu."

<sup>2</sup> Such as Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 82, and *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, 168.

<sup>3</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 350.

<sup>4</sup> In view of what Nöldeke says, *GF*, 30.

<sup>5</sup> There is also the statement in John Moschus that Nu'mān was attacking Palestine in the early part of the reign of Maurice. So his journey to Constantinople to see a Byzantine emperor must have been to the court of Maurice. For Moschus on Nu'mān, see below, 597–602.

some consequence.<sup>6</sup> With Magnus gone, it was time to try some fresh diplomacy.

2. The determination of Nu'mān to risk the journey to Constantinople after Magnus' attempt to entrap him and after all that he had done against Byzantium, including the killing of the *dux* of Arabia, was an act of courage of the first order.<sup>7</sup> It was also a reflection of the devotion of the Ghassānid house to their distinguished father, who was snatched away from them under extraordinary conditions. This has already been noted in discussing the exchange with the authorities during their revolt, where the reference was not to Munḍir or to King Munḍir but simply to "our father." Nu'mān must have been aware that in making the journey to Constantinople he was likely to be arrested, tried, and possibly put to death, but he went there all the same.

3. The importance of the Ghassānids in waging the war that Byzantium had to fight in Oriens is reflected in Maurice's request that Nu'mān resume the war against the Persians.<sup>8</sup> The clear implication of this is that the Persians, and with them their Lakhmid allies, had heard of Munḍir's arrest and of the Ghassānid revolt and had attacked Oriens, now exposed to their offensive with the disappearance of the Ghassānid shield.<sup>9</sup> This was the same situation that had occurred when Munḍir withdrew from the service of Byzantium in the early 570s. And it is clear from Maurice's promise to return his father from exile that this was the goal of Nu'mān's mission to Constantinople.

4. The doctrinal basis of the Ghassānid-Byzantine conflict is nowhere reflected better than in Maurice's request to Nu'mān to accept the Chalcedonian position. Although the house of Munḍir was staunchly Monophysite, the practical answer Nu'mān gave is also revealing: even if he were to cross over to the Chalcedonian position, his army and tribe would not and would kill him. The response reflects the Ghassānid rulers' predicament not only vis-à-vis Chalcedonian Byzantium but also their Monophysite Ghassānid army.<sup>10</sup>

5. Thus, on the rock of doctrinal persuasion, the prospects for reconciliation were dashed to the ground. Had it not been for this, the course of Ghassānid-Byzantine reconciliation may have reverted to what it had been

<sup>6</sup> So understood by Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1217. One could add that the rancor was between Maurice and Munḍir, not Maurice and Nu'mān. So Nu'mān may have thought he had some chance in dealing with an emperor with whom he had not had unfortunate encounters.

<sup>7</sup> And so understood by Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 82, and *Chronicon Anonymum ad 1234 pertinens*, p. 168, line 10.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice must have thought highly of the Ghassānid who beat the provincial *dux* of Arabia in a pitched battle.

<sup>9</sup> Maurice had just finished his term as *magister militum per Orientem* and was aware of the value of the Ghassānids, especially after Byzantium had lost to the Persians at the battle of Tela d'Manzalat when the latter won a resounding victory.

<sup>10</sup> For the keen interest that the Ghassānid army took in theological controversies of the period, see *BASIC* I.2, 818. So it was not a disingenuous statement on the part of Nu'mān.

before, and the *quid pro quo* would have been the same as when, after withdrawing, Muḏdir had returned to the service in the mid-570s to fight the Persians in return for restoring normal Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. Maurice remained a staunch Chalcedonian, and perhaps the Chalcedonian ecclesiastical establishment was behind him insisting on the conversion of the Monophysite Ghassānids.

6. As a result, not only was harmony not restored between the two, but further complications ensued. The proud Ghassānid chief swears in anger not to see the face of the Romans again. His disappointment and its expression are strange for a man in the full power of the authorities to do what they wanted with him,<sup>11</sup> but it also reflects that he had come with high hopes for an accommodation and even encouraged by the authorities. This, however, cost him dearly. They construed his oath as a threat to engage in more hostilities against Oriens. So orders were issued for his arrest while he was on his way home; he was apprehended and brought back to Constantinople.<sup>12</sup>

## B

The detention of Nuḥmān in Constantinople raises some problems that will probably remain unsolved unless some new evidence turns up to throw light on the obscurity that surrounds his stay. As has been noted earlier, the chapter in John of Ephesus that told in detail of his coming to Constantinople to meet Maurice has been lost. Perhaps that chapter or others on the Ghassānids said something of his detention, but there is no way of knowing. The chief source for this is the Greek Evagrius, who was a contemporary and was in a good position to know, and he is the safest guide to what happened to Nuḥmān in Constantinople.<sup>13</sup>

1. When Nuḥmān was brought back to Constantinople, he was treated generously and considered a prisoner at large, and no further punishment was inflicted on him. So presumably he was given the same treatment that his father had been given when he, too, had been arrested and brought to Constantinople.

2. The idiom of Evagrius suggests that the charge of *maiestas* was in-

<sup>11</sup> Maurice must have let him depart after the threat, possibly in the hope that Nuḥmān might have second thoughts. Aigrain says that he fled. There is nothing in the sources to support this, and it would be difficult to imagine how Nuḥmān would have eluded the Byzantine guards; Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1217.

<sup>12</sup> This affords the perfect explanation for the embroidered report in the Arabic sources that the poet of Kinda, Imru' al-Qays, went to Constantinople and met his fate through Byzantine intrigue on his way back to his homeland, somewhere in Anatolia, near Ancyra; see *BASIC* II.

<sup>13</sup> See Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book VI, chap. 2. p. 223. The chapter in Nicephorus Callistus is entirely derivative from Evagrius and adds nothing; see *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PG 147, XVIII, 10, col. 347.

voked against him, πάντων αὐτοῦ θάνατον καταψηφισαμένων,<sup>14</sup> and that the judgment was unanimous. It was only natural to invoke the *maiestas* charge since Nu'mān after all was an outlaw who revolted, pillaged Oriens, besieged Bostra, defeated a Roman army, and killed its *dux*. This could confirm what was said in the previous chapter, that Tiberius ordered the judges of the cities to accompany the army commanded by Magnus for the chastisement of Nu'mān after news of his revolt reached Constantinople. The generous treatment accorded him by Maurice, in view of all this, reflects well on the emperor. Perhaps he thought it would be politic to keep him alive, rather than kill him, and leave the door open for further negotiations. To have killed him would also have incensed the Ghassānids in Oriens even more, and there was no rancor between the two as there had been between Maurice and Mundir.

3. There is also the controversial question of whether or not he was exiled after his detention in Constantinople and, if so, whether it was also to Sicily. The chances are that he was not exiled. The sources that speak of this are both late sources, Michael the Syrian and Bar-Hebraeus,<sup>15</sup> of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries respectively. They both derived their account from John of Ephesus, but he has no reference to an exile inflicted on Nu'mān. The only chapter in John of Ephesus that deals specifically with Nu'mān is one whose title mentions only his coming to Constantinople. If Nu'mān had been exiled to Sicily, John of Ephesus would have mentioned it, especially as he had just mentioned the exile of Mundir and that of Sergius in two separate chapters, 44 and 46. The title of the chapter on Nu'mān would have been expansive and would have included his exile, as in the cases of Mundir and Sergius.

On the other hand, there is the testimony of Evagrius who, unlike Michael and Bar-Hebraeus, was a contemporary historian writing in Constantinople itself and was well informed about such matters. He is the sole informant on the exile of Mundir to Sicily, to which he refers in the same chapter that speaks of the detention of Nu'mān in Constantinople. He does not say anything about the exile of the son to Sicily or anywhere, only his detention as a prisoner at large.<sup>16</sup> If Maurice had exiled him, Evagrius would have recorded it, especially after he had just recorded the exile of his father.

<sup>14</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 223, line 28. So understood by P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1951), I, 259, who translates "tous les juges." For the trial of Mundir and Nu'mān, see below, 535–38.

<sup>15</sup> Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 350; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 82. Both probably constructed this and thought that he met the same fate as his father. The careful Nöldeke followed Evagrius and said nothing about his exile to Sicily or elsewhere; cf. Goubert who accepted what the secondary historians said on his banishment with his father, and so he assigned Sicily as his destination; Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 259.

<sup>16</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, VI, 2, p. 223, lines 28–29.

4. Nu'mān's detention raises the question of how long he was detained in Constantinople and for what reason. It is perfectly possible that Maurice judged that it was better to keep Nu'mān in Constantinople as a pawn in further negotiations with the Ghassānids for stabilizing the dangerous situation that existed on the eastern front in the midst of the Persian war. And, as will be discussed later, there was a resumption of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations later in the reign of Maurice.

5. How long did the Ghassānid Nu'mān stay in Constantinople? The idiom of Evagrius is also helpful here. It is noteworthy that in speaking of him he uses the present tense. This could *not* be the vivid or historic present, especially as he used the aorist in describing what Maurice did with his father.<sup>17</sup> The implication of the different use of the two tenses is that when Evagrius wrote his *History* in Constantinople in 593/94 the Ghassānid Nu'mān was still alive and being detained in Constantinople, while the exile of his father belonged to the past.

According to this analysis, Nu'mān would have spent at least twelve years in Constantinople,<sup>18</sup> not in faraway Sicily, a matter of some importance for understanding the course of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations later in the reign of Maurice and for understanding some of the odes of Nābigha, the panegyrist of the Ghassānids, on a Ghassānid king by the name of Nu'mān. It is not very clear whether the odes were on this Nu'mān or a namesake of his. That he was alive in Constantinople around 594 enhances the possibility that he was the one.<sup>19</sup>

6. The account of the revolt of Nu'mān and what he did to Byzantine territory has such intimate details and is so pro-Ghassānid in tone that it is difficult to believe that John of Ephesus could have derived it from a source other than a document or an eyewitness, most probably the latter. John did not die until 585/86, and his *History* stops reporting on events after 585. So the last three years of his life overlapped with Nu'mān's stay in the same city. It is likely that, as John of Ephesus had visited his father, Mundir, and derived information from him on the events of his reign, that he did the same with the son, Nu'mān, who was allowed to have visitors by the generosity of Maurice. It is therefore quite likely that he was the informant of John of Ephesus on his own revolt against Byzantium and what happened to him after that. Needless to say, after the capture and detention of Nu'mān in Constantinople, a new mood of pessimism must have prevailed among the Ghassānids on the future of their relations with Byzantium.

<sup>17</sup> The two relevant verbs are φρουρεῖ in the present tense, applied to Nu'mān, and προσετίμησε in the aorist, applied to Mundir; see *ibid.*, lines 23, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Did Maurice allow him the company of some members of his family as he did his father? He must have.

<sup>19</sup> On this, see *BASIC II*.

II. *LAESA MAIESTAS*: THE TRIAL OF THE TWO GHASSĀNIDS

That the two Ghassānids, father and son, Muḏīr and Nuḥmān, were charged with *crimen maiestatis* is clear from the accounts of both John of Ephesus and Evagrius. Greek and Latin legal terms, transliterated into Syriac, occur in the account of the first, while Greek legal terms appear in the history of the latter. Explicit references to a trial are lacking at least for Muḏīr, but it can be inferred for Nuḥmān and possibly implied for his father. With the exception of Stein, who devoted only one short sentence to the trial of Muḏīr, no historian of the reign of Tiberius or Maurice has ever discussed this at length.<sup>20</sup> It is proposed here to reconstruct from these scattered references in the two authors an account of the two trials, the *crimen maiestatis* leveled against the two Ghassānids, and the sequel to the charge. Out of this emerges an account of the invocation of the *Lex Iulia Maiestatis* in the reign of Maurice against two outstanding figures of the period, one of whom was a federate king accused of violating the *foedus* that obtained between the Roman state and the Ghassānids.<sup>21</sup> The two trials, those of Muḏīr and of his son, should be distinguished from each other, and so each will receive separate treatment.

## Muḏīr

Although both father and son were implied in the opening sentence of Evagrius as having been brought to trial for *crimen maiestatis*,<sup>22</sup> τῶν ὑποδίκων τῇ βασιλείᾳ, the ecclesiastical historian is less explicit about an actual trial in the case of Muḏīr. The various phases of the legal proceedings against him may be stated as follows.

Written accusations by Maurice from his headquarters in Oriens were sent to Tiberius in Constantinople, followed by verbal accusation when he went up to confer with Tiberius.<sup>23</sup> It is clearly to this that Magnus refers when he flatly faced Muḏīr with the charge outside the walls of Ḥuwwarīn in the spring of 581, during a period of armistice and negotiations with the Persians. That there was a *crimen maiestatis* preferred against Muḏīr is fairly clear from the use of the Greek terms in John of Ephesus' account of this exchange between Magnus and Muḏīr. Such terms belong to the legal terminology of Roman law.

<sup>20</sup> Stein, *Studien*, 95, where he speaks of the high treason trial, *Hochverratsprozess*. The trial does not figure in the works of P. Goubert or M. M. Whitby.

<sup>21</sup> This raises the question of the status of the two Ghassānid phylarchs. Stein thought Muḏīr was a Roman citizen, and presumably his son Nuḥmān too. I am inclined to think they were not in any real sense. They remained *foederati* and non-Romans, but if they were, an honorary *civitas* was extended to them, just as the term *stratēlatēs* was honorary when applied to Nuḥmān in a Greek inscription; see above, 506, 528.

<sup>22</sup> See Evagrius, *HE*, p. 223, line 19.

<sup>23</sup> These references to the *HE* of John of Ephesus have been documented in the two sections on *prodosia* and the fall of Muḏīr. On the technical terms used by John of Ephesus, *patronus*, πάτρων (advocate) and ἀπόκρισις (response, defense), see above, 456–57.



It is also clear from the account that Mundir was aware of the accusation and that he had already appointed Magnus as his advocate to represent him in Constantinople before Tiberius. The specific charge was clearly stated by John of Ephesus concerning the "great bridge" over the Euphrates and that this implied collusion with the enemy of the Roman people, a collusion that resulted in the failure of the campaign against Ctesiphon.

When Evagrius wrote his own account in the 590s,<sup>24</sup> the trial had already taken place and Mundir had been banished to Sicily. Although he is not at all specific about the charge, the *crimen maiestatis*, he is informative on the precise liability of Mundir and why he was brought to trial. It was construed as *laesa maiestas*, thus recalling a sentence in the *Lex Iulia Maiestatis*<sup>25</sup> which spoke of high treason, with hostile intent against the state or the emperor: "qui perduellionis reus est, hostili animo adversus rem publicam vel principem animatus."<sup>26</sup> Evagrius describes Mundir as τό τε πολίτευμα αὐτόν τε κατατροδόντα.<sup>27</sup> The charge thus involved treason against both "king and country," the Roman state and the person of the *basileus*. Presumably it was against the state (during the joint expedition of 581) and Tiberius, the then emperor, and against Maurice who succeeded him.

It is noteworthy that one of the paragraphs in the *Lex Iulia* was not invoked in defense of Mundir, namely, that the charge of *maiestas* should not be considered when it is not true, for the nature of the person must be considered: could he have done it? Had he done or devised anything beforehand? In Latin it reads as follows: "nam et personam spectandam esse, an potuerit facere, et an ante quid fecerit et an cogitaverit."<sup>28</sup> Nothing in the career of Mundir suggested any of this, of course; indeed this was the gist of his answer to Magnus when the latter conveyed to him Tiberius' order at Evaria. A fair tribunal would have acquitted him by the invocation of this clause, but in this case the adversary and the judge happened to be one and the same person.

Although Evagrius, in the opening sentence of the chapter, does speak in such a way as to suggest that Mundir was brought to trial, it must remain an open question whether a formal treason trial took place. According to the exchange with Magnus, Mundir was to go to Constantinople to make his defense before the emperor himself. This, it is known, was not done, since he

<sup>24</sup> On the date of the composition of Evagrius' *History*, see Pauline Allen, *Evagrius*, 4, 19, 266, 267. Evagrius devoted one chapter to the treason charge and treason trial of the two Ghassānids: *HE*, VI, 2; all references to Evagrius are to this chapter.

<sup>25</sup> To the *Lex Iulia Maiestatis* is devoted *Digest*, 48.4 in the *Corpus Juris Civilis* of Justinian; see *The Digest of Justinian*, ed. T. Mommsen and P. Krüger, trans. A. Watson (Philadelphia, 1985), vol. IV, 802-4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 804, lines 18-19.

<sup>27</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 223, lines 21-22.

<sup>28</sup> *Digest*, p. 804, lines 1-2.

was not received in audience, according to the explicit and express statement of John of Ephesus.<sup>29</sup> A kind and conscientious man, Tiberius, as has been suggested before, would not go the length of having the man whom he had crowned the year before be put on trial.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the charges, after being leveled by Maurice, were simply dropped and Mundir was allowed to be a prisoner at large, living comfortably in Constantinople for a while. On the accession of Maurice shortly after, Mundir's position deteriorated and he was banished to Sicily. Whether this was preceded by a trial is not clear. Perhaps not, since the idiom of Evagrius in referring to his son, Nu'mān, is different and clearly implies that the latter, unlike his father, was tried.

### Nu'mān

Both the charge of treason and the trial are more clearly predicated of Nu'mān than of Mundir, in both the Syriac and the Greek accounts. The Ghassānid revolt, possibly in June 581, would easily have justified a charge of treason since it involved an openly and violently hostile action by a former *foederatus* against Roman territory, property, and life, the climax of which was the battle of Bostra and the death of the *dux* of Arabia. From the point of view of the Ghassānids, this was not really a *crimen maiestatis* but an act of retaliation against Byzantine treachery, directed against the Ghassānid monarchy represented by Mundir. Even so, technically it was a violation of the *foedus* between the two parties, and in the epitome of John of Ephesus, preserved by Michael the Syrian, Magnus openly accuses the pseudo-Nu'mān, the young man whom Nu'mān sent to Magnus in his stead, of having made war against the Byzantine king, and he uses this as the ground for throwing him in chains.<sup>31</sup> So Nu'mān was vulnerable, and all the clauses of the *Lex Iulia* that are relevant for incriminating him with the charge of treason could easily be invoked. Evagrius, writing some ten years after the appearance of Nu'mān in Constantinople, speaks of Nu'mān's offenses first in general terms, as one who had inflicted all sorts of mischief and woe on the Roman state, and specifically singles out his predatory raids against the two Phoenicias and the Palestines.

A trial for treason must have taken place against Nu'mān, since the references in the sources are more explicit. Even before Magnus had his encounter with the pseudo-Nu'mān, John of Ephesus speaks of judges<sup>32</sup> accompanying the army that Magnus led against Nu'mān in addition to the military

<sup>29</sup> *HE*, p. 131, line 19. Cf. the trial of the patriarch of Antioch, Gregory, in Constantinople.

<sup>30</sup> Most likely he was embarrassed to see him; Goubert suggests that Tiberius did not condescend to do so; Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 255.

<sup>31</sup> Magnus orders his followers: "En! qui in regem bellum excitavit catenas ei inicite"; *HE*, p. 133, line 10.

<sup>32</sup> On these *daiyānē*, "judges," see above, 474 with note 238.

dukes. The implication could be that these were to try him for his treacherous conduct against the Roman state and that this was to take place somewhere in Oriens, not in Constantinople. This is also clearly implied in the opening sentence of the chapter in Evagrius that speaks of those who were brought to trial for treason against the state, τῶν ὑποδίκων τῇ βασιλείᾳ,<sup>33</sup> and since Evagrius was writing in the 590s, he was writing about events in the past and not imagining what would happen in the future to a rebellious federate chief.

Perhaps the most decisive passage is where Evagrius speaks of the death sentence passed against Nu'mān unanimously: πάντων αὐτοῦ θάνατον καταψηφισαμένων.<sup>34</sup> This is clear, and the use of the legal term is thus decisive. The historian is speaking not in general terms but in specific ones—that all voted against him at the trial. How much of a trial it was is not clear; perhaps it was neither extended nor publicized. Byzantium and Maurice wanted to contain the fallout of the Ghassānid revolt because of the Persian war they had on their hands, and they did not wish another one in Oriens. Hence also the commutation of the sentence by Maurice into that of some form of house arrest, in which the Ghassānid prince lived comfortably for at least ten years.

### III. AMID ALIEN CORN: MUNDIR IN SICILY

After his arrest and transport to Constantinople, Mundir spent a few months there. But the situation, bad as it was, grew worse when Tiberius was taken ill and died in August 582. Not only was the kind ruler taken away, who might soon have repented and pardoned Mundir, but also Maurice, Mundir's enemy, acceded to the throne soon after Tiberius' death. This was a difficult situation for both of them. While Tiberius was alive, Maurice was still *magister militum per Orientem*, and so was far from Mundir in Constantinople. This may have been partly what Tiberius wanted when he ordered Mundir's arrest—to separate the two. But now his death united them again in the capital, and the vindictive Maurice would not tolerate it: as emperor, the first act he performed in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations was the banishment of Mundir.

John of Ephesus wrote an account of the banishment in Book III, chapter 54 of the *HE*, but only the title of the chapter has survived: "On the imprisonment of Mundir and his banishment from the capital to a distant exile."<sup>35</sup> In spite of this loss, it is possible to make some observations concerning Mundir's fate.

The motives for his banishment are clear. In addition to the rancor between the two, Maurice probably thought that as long as Mundir was in

<sup>33</sup> *HE*, p. 223, line 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, line 28.

<sup>35</sup> See *HE*, p. 88, lines 1–2.

Constantinople, the Ghassānids would not rest until they effected his release. As he did not want that, he decided that the best course was to send him off to a place far distant from Oriens.

John of Ephesus does not say where Munḍir was sent, but Evagrius clearly states that it was to Sicily.<sup>36</sup> There is no need to dispute this. John of Ephesus probably chose to say “distant exile” because he wanted a sensational or striking title to reflect the iniquity of Maurice in banishing Munḍir so far from his homeland. It is possible that Sicily would have meant nothing to his Syriac-speaking readers in the Orient, but he would have been explicit in the lost text of the chapter on Munḍir’s exile.

The choice of Sicily was not inappropriate from Maurice’s viewpoint. He wanted his old enemy as far from him and from Monophysite influence as possible. Oriens was out of the question since this was Munḍir’s old stamping ground. Egypt, too, and Armenia were out of the question and so was Anatolia, since the Monophysites were represented in all these areas.<sup>37</sup> So he decided to send him to the West, and Sicily, an island, seemed a good choice.

John of Ephesus’ chapter 55 also survives only in the form of its title: “On one of the chiefs of Munḍir whose name was Sergius, who was also sent into exile.”<sup>38</sup> The loss of this chapter is even more lamentable than that of chapter 54, but something of the data included in the lost text may be reclaimed by a close examination of the extant title. The natural presumption is that Sergius was also sent to Sicily to accompany Munḍir in exile, just as members of his family were. John of Ephesus must have been impressed by this Sergius to the point of giving his exile a separate treatment and not including him in the list of those of his family who were allowed to be with Munḍir during his imprisonment in Constantinople. So it is worth probing into his identity.

The Syriac term that describes him, *rīshānā*, means “chief, head,” and it could easily identify him as one of the military commanders or phylarchs under Munḍir’s command. He was clearly not one of Munḍir’s household, and so he possibly was a non-Ghassānid federate Arab phylarch. He was banished with Munḍir either because he came of his own accord to keep his chief company, or had raised the standard of revolt and had been arrested and brought to Constantinople like Munḍir himself. Apparently he was important enough to be given this treatment, and he could have been the chief phylarch of the Salīhids or Tanūkhids, the former principal *foederati* of the fourth and

<sup>36</sup> Evagrius, *HE*, p. 223, lines 23–24. Evagrius receives perfect confirmation from the letter of Pope Gregory to Innocentius, the praetorian prefect of Africa in A.D. 600; see below, 602–5.

<sup>37</sup> Petra in Palaestina Tertia used to be a place of exile in this proto-Byzantine period.

<sup>38</sup> See *HE*, p. 88, lines 2–3. For the Syriac version, see *HE*, textus, p. 120, lines 6–7.

fifth centuries. His name is strange for an Arab phylarch. All the names of the Arab phylarchs are pure Arab names, so his must have been an exception, and the name clearly suggests that the process of Christianization had affected the Arab phylarchal onomasticon.

Alternatively to this identification as a phylarch, there is the possibility that Sergius was an ecclesiastic. The name itself is anomalous and almost unique for an Arab phylarch in the service of Byzantium in the sixth century; it suggests an ecclesiastic more than a phylarch. This makes possible a return to the Syriac term *rīshānā*, "chief," which describes him in the title and which could have an ecclesiastical connotation: an ecclesiastic who was a chief or a head in his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, such as the head of a monastery, in Syriac *rīsh-dayrā*. This could bring to mind a Sergius who was the *rīsh-dayrā* of "the monastery of 'Ūqabtā" and who was closely related to Munḍir. He was the one who signed the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia against the Tritheists, Eugenius and Conon, and he did it through his prior, Eustathius, who was the priest of the church of Munḍir himself.<sup>39</sup>

It is not impossible, then, that the Sergius mentioned in the title of chapter 55 was an ecclesiastic, possibly the abbot of this monastery. As a compromise, he could have been both a soldier and a priest, in much the same way that Ephraim, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, had been a *comes Orientis* before his incumbency of the Patriarchate of Antioch. This seems to make better sense. Munḍir was a zealous Christian and an exile in Sicily, where there were no Monophysites. This would have presented a problem for the Arab king if he wanted to worship according to the rite of the Monophysite church. The problem was thus possibly solved by sending with him a Monophysite cleric, who could minister to his spiritual needs.

#### IV. THE "DISSOLUTION" of the GHASSĀNID PHYLARCHATE: JOHN OF EPHEBUS

The two years or so that followed the arrest and exile of Nu'mān and ended in 585, the year in which the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of John of Ephesus ends, was recorded by this Monophysite churchman. Only the titles of the two chapters that treated this short period have survived and have been epitomized by others in an unsatisfactory fashion. Nöldeke was the first to analyze the sources for this period critically and depended on three: John of Ephesus, the Armenian version of Michael the Syrian, and Bar-Hebraeus.<sup>40</sup> Since he wrote, the Syriac version of Michael the Syrian has been discovered and published. This has changed the status of the Armenian version which, before the discovery of the Syriac, was the only extant version of the *Chronicle* and Nöldeke's

<sup>39</sup> For this Sergius, see *BASIC* I.2, 831.

<sup>40</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 31–32.

principal source for this period. A return to these sources is thus imperative, especially after the fire that the Armenian version, by the priest Ishök in 1248, has been under by the editor of the Syriac text, J. B. Chabot: "On constate que, surtout en ce qui concerne l'histoire religieuse, Ishök a plus d'une fois dénaturé la pensée de Michel pour interpréter les événements dans un sens favorable aux Arméniens. On ne pourra désormais user prudemment de cette adaptation sans le contrôle du texte original. En réalité, elle perd son importance comme document historique et n'apporte aucun secours pour compléter ou restituer les passages mutilés dans le syriaque."<sup>41</sup> It is amply clear that a reinvestigation of the sources for this period, in which the Armenian version held a central position, is absolutely necessary. Fortunately the passage in the Armenian version in which the "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate is discussed will emerge unscathed, and so Nöldeke's dependence on it turns out to be justified. However, some of his conclusions have to be rejected and others modified in light of new discoveries.

## A

The word "dissolution" has been put within quotation marks to indicate that it was not long before Ghassānid-Byzantine relations were restored later in the reign of Maurice. Nöldeke drew attention to this, despite the misleading title of the chapter in John of Ephesus on the rise and fall of the Ghassānids, which some modern authors have accepted uncritically.<sup>42</sup> John of Ephesus died around 585/86, and so the restoration was naturally unknown to him. As this will be treated at length in the course of this chapter, the concentration here will be on reexamining the two titles that have survived in John of Ephesus and the chapters that have survived in an unsatisfactory manner in his later epitomators.

The titles relevant to this discussion are those of chapters 41 and 42 of the sixth book of the *HE*: "On the rise and subsequent fall of the principality of the Roman Arabs" and "On those of the chiefs of the Arabs who went and surrendered themselves to the Persians."<sup>43</sup> In spite of their brevity, the two titles are informative. In the first, it is the "fall" and not the rise that matters in this context, and it is clear that in 586 when John of Ephesus penned this title and the chapter that went with it, one could still speak of the fall of the Ghassānid phylarchate. So in spite of the subsequent restoration, however partial, later in the reign of Maurice, the fall of the Ghassānids must be true

<sup>41</sup> See *Chronique*, I, 1–11.

<sup>42</sup> Such as P. Goubert, who titles one of his sections "La fin des Ghassanides," *Byzance*, I, 259.

<sup>43</sup> For these titles in Latin, see *HE*, p. 209, lines 27–29; the title of chapter 41 reads "quomodo principatus Ṭayâyê Romanorum elatus sit et postea depressus"; the title of chapter 42 reads "de eis e principibus Ṭayâyê qui abierunt et se Persis dediderunt."



at least for the time being, and this statement, general as it is, is helpful in recovering from later epitomators exactly what this "fall" consisted in. The second title is more specific than the first, in that it states the destination of some of the federate chiefs who left the service of Byzantium—it was Persia, the secular enemy, and this is significant as it reflected the deep sense of discontent and anger that pervaded the Ghassānid camp. As the epitomators speak of more than one destination, it is good to have as absolutely certain this one, Persia, before examining the others. The way the title is worded is helpful for examining what the other sources say on this matter. It suggests that other chiefs had other destinations, an implication confirmed by the slight modification introduced into the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael and the explicit and expansive statement in its Armenian version.

## B

The next source to be reconsidered is the Syriac version of Michael the Syrian. The relevant portion is a paragraph that follows the arrest of Nu'mān, presumably in 584: "Le royaume des Ṭayâyê fut partagé entre quinze princes. La plupart d'entre eux se joignirent aux Perses, et dès lors l'empire des Ṭayâyê chrétiens prit fin et cessa, à cause de la perfidie des Romains. L'hérésie se répandit parmi les Ṭayâyê."<sup>44</sup> This short paragraph summarizes what must have been two detailed chapters in John of Ephesus which this ecclesiastical historian, a staunch Monophysite and a great admirer of the Ghassānids, must have filled with significant details on the situation around 584/85. Most valuable, however, is the statement on the division of the kingdom of the "Ṭayâyê" (Ghassānids) among fifteen chiefs; both the number and the fact of division are important. This paragraph must have summarized only that part of the first title that spoke of the "fall" of the Ghassānids, not their rise. At least the general statement on the fall is more specific. Laconic as it is, it raises some questions, especially on the identity of these chiefs/phylarchs. Were they Ghassānids, non-Ghassānids (Tanūkhids, Salīhids, etc.), or both? Did the fifteen-part division of the Arab federate presence follow provincial lines in Oriens?

Michael offers no answers to these questions. However, a possible implication of his statement is that these were Ghassānids, or at least pro-Ghassānids, who were outraged by the Byzantine treatment of Nu'mān and for that reason reorganized themselves, after the demise of the central authority of the Ghassānids, into fifteen groups.

The second part of the paragraph states that most of the chiefs went over to the Persians and surrendered to them. This reproduces the second title in John of Ephesus but modifies it by using the word "most." This may have

<sup>44</sup> *Chronique*, II, 350–51.

been a modification arbitrarily introduced by Michael or he may be reflecting accurately what John of Ephesus had said in his chapter, extant when Michael compiled his *Chronicle*. The statement in Michael also implies that Persia was not the only destination of the discontented chiefs but that there were others: Persia was the destination of only "most" of them. This statement, too, on the surrender of the chiefs to the Persians could corroborate the view that these chiefs were Ghassānids or pro-Ghassānid, since the natural implication is that they were outraged by the treatment accorded the Ghassānids Mundir and Nu'mān and vented their outrage by leaving the service of Byzantium and, what is more, by going over to their secular enemy, the Persians.

## C

The Armenian version of the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian was an *abrégé* done by the priest Ishōk in 1248. Two translations of this Armenian version appeared, one by E. Dulaurier in 1848 and another by V. Langlois in 1868. Nöldeke used both but quoted the former. In view of the importance of the new data provided by the Armenian version, both translations are given here.

Dulaurier's version reads as follows: "Ces tristes nouvelles ayant été connues dans le pays des Arabes, ils en eurent le coeur tout troublé et navré. Ils se séparèrent les uns des autres, en se divisant en quinze troupes qui se donnèrent chacune un chef. Les uns se soumirent aux Perses, séduits par leur présents, les autres allèrent au secours du pays de Kemir et un petit nombre d'entre eux se donna aux Grecs. Ce fut ainsi que la perverse hérésie de Chalcédoine causa la ruine d'un beau royaume."<sup>45</sup>

Langlois's version reads: "Lorsque cette fatale nouvelle fut connue dans les états de Mentour, ses sujets furent consternés et blessés au fond du coeur. La discorde éclata bientôt parmi eux, et s'étant divisés en 15 partis, chacun élut un chef. Quelques uns de ces chefs corrompus par l'or des Perses se soumirent à leur domination, les autres se réunirent aux Chamirs, et un petit nombre accepta la suzeraineté des Grecs. Ce fut ainsi que l'impie concile de Chalcédoine devint la cause de la chute de ce magnifique royaume des Syriens."<sup>46</sup>

In view of the animadversions of Chabot on the Armenian version and of the fact that this version provides new and detailed data on the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate, not to be found in the Syriac original of Michael's *Chronicle*, two important questions arise: are these new data authentic and, if so, whence did Ishōk derive them? As will be seen from the detailed discussion of the data in this section, the answer to the question of authenticity will be in the affirmative since the data fall outside the range of the two themes, religious history and Armenian history, which, according to Chabot, swayed

<sup>45</sup> Dulaurier's translation is unavailable to me; so I quote him from Nöldeke, *GF*, 31.

<sup>46</sup> V. Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand* (Venice, 1869), 213.

Ishōk in introducing changes in the Syriac text of Michael. So they could not have been made up by him, nor would he have any interest in making them up; and they do have intrinsic or inherent credibility.

As to whence Ishōk derived his data, there are three possibilities: (1) John of Ephesus himself may have been his source, and so he could have derived this information from the two lost chapters in his *HE* on the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate still extant in the thirteenth century. But John of Ephesus does not seem to have been known to the Armenians, which is rather surprising in view of the fact that he is the major Monophysite historian of the sixth century. (2) He may have derived his data from a Syriac manuscript of Michael that included them. The fact that the Syriac version of Michael has survived only in an *unicum*<sup>47</sup> corroborates this view. It is, of course, impossible to believe that the famous *Chronicle* had only one copy, the autograph of Michael himself! There must have been many copies made of the *Chronicle*, and in the process the copyists introduced changes. One of these copies extant in the thirteenth century may have preserved the data on the dissolution of the Ghassānids which Ishōk used, while the *unicum* that has survived was a copy that had suffered at the hands of the copyists, who for some reason did not find the data on the Ghassānids interesting to keep. (3) Finally, Ishōk may have derived the data from sources other than John of Ephesus or Michael the Syrian. Of these three possibilities, the second is the most likely.<sup>48</sup> It is supported by the fact that the three main elements of the paragraph in the Armenian version follow closely the three main elements in the Syriac, but amplify them: (1) the division of the phylarchate into fifteen groups; (2) the emigration of the groups to destinations other than Persia; (3) and the final pious reflection of the Monophysite writer that, as a result, heresy spread among the Arabs.

The authenticity<sup>49</sup> of the data in the Armenian version will become clear from the following detailed analysis.

<sup>47</sup> On this, see *Chronique*, I, xxxvii–xlili. As is clear from page xxxvii, this is a late manuscript copied in 1598!

<sup>48</sup> This is also the view of Stephen Gero with whom I have corresponded on this point. He also added that the Armenian version has some items based on good Syriac sources, such as the question of the Queen of Sheba.

<sup>49</sup> For an evaluation of the Armenian version of Michael, see F. Haase, "Die armenische Rezension der syrischen Chronik Michaels des Grossen," *OC*, n.s. 5 (1915), 60–82, 271–84. So far the most important items in the Armenian version have been the sources that Michael used, listed at the beginning of his work, but missing in the Syriac version. Its data on the "dissolution" of the Ghassānid dynasty may now be added, and they are important, as will be seen in the course of this chapter. Thus the Armenian version is not entirely without value as Chabot suggested. For a recent article that partly deals with the Armenian version of Michael, see S. P. Cowe, "A Hitherto Unrecognized Chronicle to the Year A.D. 1272," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 3 (1987), 15–31.

1. The laconic statement in John of Ephesus on the "fall" of the Ghassānids is now made clear and that in the Syriac version in Michael on the division into fifteen groups receives some important clarification, namely, that discord reigned in the Arab federate camp in Oriens after news of the imprisonment of the Ghassānids Munḍir and Nu'mān reached them.<sup>50</sup> The federates divided into fifteen groups, and what is important is that each group elected its own chief. This suggests that these chiefs, or many of them, were not Ghassānids but groups on whom the previous Ghassānid phylarchate may have imposed chiefs of its own, perhaps Ghassānid phylarchs. These non-Ghassānid phylarchs could still have been pro-Ghassānid, having been outraged by Byzantine treachery toward Munḍir and Nu'mān, and so they could have decided to leave the service of Byzantium. Perhaps Byzantium discontinued the subsidy, the *annona*, which it had extended to them, too. It was this information provided by the Armenian version on the groups' election of their own chiefs that made Nöldeke argue that these phylarchs were not Ghassānid but belonged to the previous federate groups in the service of Byzantium before the rise of the Ghassānids to power, who thus obscured them, especially during the reigns of Arethas and Munḍir.<sup>51</sup> This is perfectly possible and, if so, they must have belonged to the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, the *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth and fifth centuries. But other tribal groups may also have been represented,<sup>52</sup> including the Ghassānids themselves.

2. The description of the division into fifteen groups and the election of the chiefs suggests that these tribal groups of *foederati* were now acting on their own and not in concert with the Byzantine authorities as their overlords. This is corroborated by the further datum that they went their own ways and reached various destinations, leaving the service of Byzantium. If accurate, this suggests a general confusion and disorder in Oriens after the disintegration of the centralized government represented by the Ghassānid phylarchate-*Basileia*. Perhaps the whole federate presence in Oriens, Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, was shaken by the elimination of Munḍir and Nu'mān, and so, possibly for a short time, Oriens was without federates.

3. While John of Ephesus and his epitomator Michael, in the Syriac

<sup>50</sup> A tribute to the power of the Ghassānid phylarchate as a unifying force that kept these centrifugal tendencies among the tribes in check.

<sup>51</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 32. His view received considerable support from the emergence of a phylarch shortly after the "dissolution," with a recognizably Salīhid name, fighting the Persians. Nöldeke had mentioned the phylarch earlier in his monograph but did not bring this to bear on his view of the pre-Ghassānid chiefs during this period of the dissolution. For this chief, see below, 550–52.

<sup>52</sup> On these other tribes of the federate shield that did not belong to the Tanūkhids, the Salīhids, and the Ghassānids, see *BAFOC*, 382–85.

version, speak explicitly of only one destination for the discontented federate tribes, Persia, the Armenian version speaks of three. These must have been mentioned in the chapter in John of Ephesus that is not extant. The prominence he gave to the Persians in the title is explicable by the fact that he wanted to demonstrate the extent of the folly of Chalcedonian Byzantium in its treatment of the Ghassānids, who were thus driven to the length of going over to the Persians, the secular enemies of Byzantium and fire-worshippers at that. That there were departures to destinations other than Persia is implied in both John of Ephesus and in the Syriac version, as has already been argued.<sup>53</sup>

a. The first of the three destinations was Persia, and this, as has been indicated, must be accepted as absolutely true, since it is in the title of the original source, John of Ephesus. The Armenian version adds that they were drawn there by Persian gold, possible after the *annona* stopped. John of Ephesus simply says that they *surrendered* to the Persians; perhaps this reflects their chagrin in view of the Byzantine treatment of their chiefs. Other reasons will be suggested in the discussion of Bar-Hebraeus' version of these events.

b. Most important is their departure for Kemir (Chamir). Before discussing its significance, it is necessary to dispose of a mistake made by Nöldeke in interpreting the Armenian version. Nöldeke thought that this meant Cappadocia in Asia Minor, and he thought that the Armenian version was confusing the emigration of the Ghassānids in the sixth century with that of the Arab tribes of Muslim times, such as the Ghassānids and Iyād, into Asia Minor.<sup>54</sup> But surely this cannot be accepted, and the statement on the emigration to Kemir must stand. Nöldeke simply made a mistake in identifying Kemir with Cappadocia, which in Michael is always written Καππαδοκία.<sup>55</sup> This led him to think that the author was confusing the two emigrations—the one in the sixth and the other in the seventh century.

The Kemir of the Armenian version is of course none other than Ḥimyar in South Arabia,<sup>56</sup> always used in Michael the Syrian in this form for Ḥimyar. With the correct identification, this makes the statement on the emigration to that destination perfectly credible and authentic. Ḥimyar is, after all, where the Ghassānids had hailed from before they wandered in the Peninsula and

<sup>53</sup> Such data on the three destinations of the federate chiefs could not possibly have been invented by the priest Ishök, since it touched neither on religious issues nor on Armenian history, in which he was interested.

<sup>54</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 31, and also note 4 on "Gamir" as "Kappadocien."

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> The identification of Armenian Kemir not with Cappadocia in Asia Minor but with Ḥimyar in South Arabia has been accepted by Father Michel van Esbroeck whom the present writer asked for an opinion on this point. He was good enough to go through occurrences of Kemir in the Armenian version for confirming it is Ḥimyar and not Cappadocia.

finally made the Byzantine connection. They kept their contacts with South Arabia, especially Najrān, strong throughout the sixth century, especially after the martyrdoms at Najrān around 520. It is therefore only natural that they should have flocked to Najrān, the city of the Arab martyrs their relatives, after their sharp collision with the Byzantine authorities, which left two of their kings practically martyrs, languishing in Byzantine prisons. South Arabia, now under Persian rule, would have welcomed them, especially Najrān.<sup>57</sup>

The two French versions are not in agreement on how the Ghassānids reached Ḥimyar. The first says that they "allèrent au secours du pays de Kemir," while the second says that they "se réunirent aux Chamirs." Either is possible, although the first is richer in content as it implies that the Ḥimyarites needed help. In this case, Ḥimyar is Najrān, and it is possible that after the Persian conquest of South Arabia in 570 there was conflict in Najrān between Judaism and Christianity.<sup>58</sup> As the Ghassānids were staunch Christian soldiers, and as they were unable to come to the rescue of Najrān against the Judaizing king of Ḥimyar<sup>59</sup> around 520, they would have embraced the prospect of marching to South Arabia in order to help Najrān.

c. Finally, a third part of these fifteen chiefs accepted Byzantine suzerainty. Nöldeke thought that the statement must be interpreted in ecclesiastical terms, namely, that the Arabs went over from the Monophysite to the Chalcedonian position.<sup>60</sup> This need not be so. It should be remembered from the account of the enthronement of Muḍīr's brother as king by Magnus and the reference to some Ghassānid princes in the Syriac document that some of the Ghassānids were Chalcedonians. So it is possible that what is meant here are those Ghassānids who now came out openly as Chalcedonians and cooperated with the Byzantine authorities. The final sentence in the Armenian version reflects the Monophysite slant from which the work was written. And it is clearly John of Ephesus' summation of the cause of the fall of the Ghassānids in the last chapter, 42, of Book VI.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. the case of Kinda, the powerful South Arabian tribe that also contracted the Byzantine connection. According to the Arabic sources, the tribe, or most of it, returned to the Arabian south—in Ḥaḍramawt—whence it had come after the death of its king, Arethas, ca. 530, and other later misfortunes; see the present writer in *EI*, V, 119, s.v. Kinda. The emigration to South Arabia and Najrān is another stamp of authenticity on the Armenian version. The priest Ishōk could not possibly have known this detail about the relation of the Ghassānids to South Arabia and Najrān, in addition to the fact that the datum falls completely outside the range of his interest in tampering with the Syriac text of Michael.

<sup>58</sup> On a manifestation of such conflict in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poet al-A<sup>ḥ</sup>shā, see *Dīwān al-A<sup>ḥ</sup>shā al-Kabīr*, ed. M. Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1950), 263.

<sup>59</sup> See the present writer in *Martyrs*, 176.

<sup>60</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 31.



## D

Finally, the "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate is described in the *Chronicon Syriacum* of Bar-Hebraeus:

And the kingdom of the Arabs (Ṭayāyê) was divided into fifteen divisions. The greater number of them cleaved to the Persians, and some of them to the Chalcedonians. And others cast away [their] weapons, and dwelt in cities and villages in the land of Sen'ār and in 'Athôr (Assyria), and in Syria, and they have preserved [their] orthodoxy until this day, like those in Hadîthâ, and Hîth, and in Bêth 'Arbâyê, and in Kûrîthîm which is in the land of Emesa, and in Nabk and other places.<sup>61</sup>

Bar-Hebraeus does not add much of anything to what Michael says in the Syriac version and is poorer than the Armenian version in providing data. He does, however, expatiate on the various places where many of the Ghassānids or Monophysite Arabs settled, in both parts of the Fertile Crescent in Syria and Mesopotamia. Nöldeke analyzed this passage and concluded that Bar-Hebraeus was speaking of conditions that obtained in the thirteenth century rather than in the sixth, since the places he mentions were well-known Monophysite settlements.<sup>62</sup> This is possible, although the possibility must be entertained that some of the emigrants did go to Mesopotamia, since this was Persian territory and John of Ephesus and Michael do say that many went over to Persian territory. Moreover, this area in Mesopotamia was heavily evangelized by Monophysite missionaries, such as Aḥūdemmeh and followed by Marouta. So it is perfectly natural to expect that some of the Ghassānids and Monophysite Arabs decided to emigrate to a region that was doctrinally congenial to them.<sup>63</sup>

## E

Perhaps the foregoing sections have given a little more precision to the laconic statements on what happened in this period of confusion and instability that characterized the so-called "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate. Some general conclusions may now be drawn.

1. Precise chronology for this period is not possible, but some termini may be used in order to define broadly the duration of this period. The Ghassānids still maintained an important presence in Oriens until the journey of Nu'mān to Constantinople and his subsequent arrest and detention there. This could be assigned to the year 584 in all probability. John of Ephesus,

<sup>61</sup> Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronography*, trans. Budge, I, 83.

<sup>62</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 32.

<sup>63</sup> The activities of these two Monophysite ecclesiastics in Mesopotamia were brought together in F. Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens*, 16–17; on Aḥūdemmeh see also *BAFOC*, 419–22.

whose *HE* does not record events after 585 and who himself died possibly the following year, must have been thinking of this year or two when he spoke of the "dissolution." Presumably when news reached Ghassānid territory of the second treachery of Byzantium against the Ghassānid royal house, the "dissolution" described by him and his epitomators then took place. The next terminus may be assigned to 586/87, some two years later, when two Arab phylarchs take part in the campaign of the army of the Orient against the Persians.<sup>64</sup> From this and other indications, it may be safely inferred that a Ghassānid federate presence is in evidence in Oriens again. So the period of estrangement may have been two or three years. And what emerges from this is that the term "dissolution" is misleading if it implies the end of the Ghassānids literally. It should thus be interpreted as true of only a short period of some two or three years.

2. The "dissolution" is important in that it revealed the tribal structure of the federate shield in Oriens in the sixth century. The Ghassānids so dominated the federate scene that they completely obscured the federate presence of the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, the principal Arab federates of Byzantium in the two previous centuries. Non-Ghassānid federate presence surfaces again both during and after the "dissolution." Furthermore, the statement on the "fall" of the Ghassānids in the title of chapter 41 in John of Ephesus cannot be taken literally. The Monophysite writer was probably reluctant to say that there were some members of the Ghassānid royal house who were not Monophysites but Chalcedonians. These probably remained in the employ of Byzantium during this short period of "dissolution."

3. The "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate and the division of the Arab federate presence in Oriens gives a clear picture of the achievement and significance of Justinian's Ghassānid policy—his creation of a unified Arab phylarchate under a supreme phylarch and of a *Basileia* under the federate Ghassānid king Arethas in 530. The federate monolith created then was broken up into fifteen chieftainships. It was a dismal spectacle of confusion, division, and instability in which Maurice undid the work of Justinian after a powerfully successful presence that had lasted a half century.

#### V. THE ARAB *FOEDERATI* DURING THE REIGN OF MAURICE

With the death of John of Ephesus in 585/86, the student of this period—the remaining portion of the reign of Maurice until 602—is deprived of a principal source for the history of the Ghassānids and Arab-Byzantine relations in general. The gap is not filled by another historian, and so federate history is very poorly documented. For reconstructing the history of Arab-Byzantine

<sup>64</sup> On Hujr, possibly a Ghassānid, mentioned by Theophylact, and Jafna, mentioned in Michael the Syrian a little later as Byzantine phylarchs, see the following chapter.

relations in this period, one has to depend on a few references, especially two in the *History* of Theophylact Simocatta and one in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian. But all are significant references that throw light on important questions pertaining to the Arab federate presence in Oriens after the arrest and exile of the two Ghassānids, Muṇḍir and his son Nu'mān. Echoes from the Arabic sources—contemporary Arabic poetry—help in the process of reconstruction.

### A

In his account of the campaign of Philippicus in 586 against the Persians, which ended with the victory of Solachon in the spring of the same year, Theophylact states:

The general instructed the Romans not to touch the farmers' labours, enjoining this in order to spare the countryside. So, on the next day he equipped selected men to reconnoitre the enemy, and entrusted them to the captain Sergius, by whom the protection of Mardes had been undertaken, along with Ogyrus and Zogomus; these were tribal chiefs of the force of Roman allies, whom Latins are accustomed to call Saracens. And so the men sent out by the general hunted down some of the barbarian throng and, after torturing them, found out about the Kardarigan's current and earlier camps.<sup>65</sup>

As the Greek clearly indicates,<sup>66</sup> the two Arabs were phylarchs in the technical sense, leading an Arab allied, federate contingent (σύμμαχοι)<sup>67</sup> in the army of Philippicus. It is clear that even after the souring of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations and the exile of the two Ghassānids, Byzantium did not dispense with the services of other Arab *foederati* who were available in Oriens.

<sup>65</sup> Theophylact, *History*, 45. All quotations from Theophylact in this and other chapters are taken from the English version of Michael and Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1986). There is also a German version with a competent introduction and commentary: P. Schreiner, *Theophylaktos Simokates Geschichte*, Bibliothek der griechischen Literatur 20 (Stuttgart, 1985). For the Greek text, see *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor and P. Wirth, Teubner (Stuttgart, 1972). Citations from the Greek text will be from the Teubner edition of Theophylact.

For this campaign of Philippicus which ended in the victory of Solachon, see Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 94–96. Solachon lies to the east of the river Khābūr (Aborras) and west of Nisibis; see map 4 (Upper Mesopotamia) in Whitby, *op. cit.*

<sup>66</sup> The sentence that describes the two Arab commanders reads as follows: τὸν τε Ὠγυρον καὶ Ζώγομον φύλαρχοι δ' οὗτοι τῆς συμμάχου τῶν Ῥωμαίων δυνάμεως, οὓς Σαρακηνοὺς εἶθιστο Λατίνοις ἀποκαλεῖν (p. 72, line 23–p. 73, line 2). The German version renders Greek φύλαρχοι accurately as a technical term, which the English version does not with its "tribal chiefs"; see Schreiner, *Theophylaktos*, p. 64, line 21, where the term is correctly translated "Phylarchen."

<sup>67</sup> The Arab phylarchs of this campaign are also noted by Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 255, line 11.

These joined the army of the Orient as they normally had done, and took part in its Persian wars of the reign of Maurice. The spring of 586 saw them performing under Philippicus, acting as scouts, reconnaissance activity in which they were experienced.<sup>68</sup>

The passage in Theophylact raises some important problems, the first of which is that of identification.

1. The second of the two names is undoubtedly Arabic, *Ḍujʿum*, the same as the eponym of the Zokomids, the ruling house among the Salīhids, the principal *foederati* of Byzantium in the fifth century. The name is so rare that it can only be that of a federate Salīhid phylarch, and the context makes it certain that this was the case. An Arab phylarch fighting in the army of the Orient and described as an ally of the Romans/Byzantines by Theophylact can only have been a Salīhid phylarch.<sup>69</sup>

2. The first of the two names is also certainly Arabic, *Ḥujr*, but there is no certainty about his tribal affiliation. *Ḥujr* occurs in the sources as a Ghassānid name as well as a Kindite one, and there is no way of telling which of the two tribal groups the phylarch belonged to, especially as both Kinda and Ghassān were federates for Byzantium in this same century. The souring of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, which ended in a bloody encounter shortly before the battle of Solachon was fought, could suggest that the phylarch was Kindite,<sup>70</sup> but no certainty can be predicated in this respect as it has been in the case of *Ḍujʿum/Zogomos*.

3. The emergence of a Salīhid name as a phylarch in the army of the Orient, to the apparent omission of any reference to the Ghassānids who had occupied the stage of Arab-Byzantine relations, raises the important question of whether Byzantium revived its interest in its principal *foederati* of yesterday, such as the Salīhids and the Kindites, whom the extraordinary elevation of the Ghassānid Arethas ca. 530 had obscured and dwarfed.<sup>71</sup> So it is perfectly possible that after their bloody encounters with the Ghassānids, the Byzantines reverted to dealing with other, non-Ghassānid phylarchs, such as the Salīhids and the Kindites, and the picture drawn of the aftermath of the Ghassānid-Byzantine encounter by John of Ephesus gives support to this conclusion.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> For a similar account of the Arabs as a tactical force employed for reconnoitering, see Procopius' account of Belisarius' Assyrian campaign in 541, above, 226–30.

<sup>69</sup> So understood by Nöldeke, *GF*, 8. In spite of Nöldeke's observations on this point, Devreesse mistakenly thought he was a Ghassānid; see Devreesse, *PA*, 282 note 3. See also the following footnote.

<sup>70</sup> Nöldeke was also inclined to think that he was not a Ghassānid. Speaking of a Ghassānid *Ḥujr* early in the 7th century, he says that there could hardly be a relationship between this Ghassānid and the *Ḥujr* mentioned in Theophylact; see Nöldeke, *GF*, 41 note 1.

<sup>71</sup> See the section on the Usays inscription, above, 117–24.

<sup>72</sup> So also understood by Nöldeke, *GF*, 32.

How long Byzantine hostility toward the Ghassānids lasted is not clear, but it could not have been long. Very soon a phylarch is attested with a name that clearly betrays his Ghassānid identity.

The passage in Theophylact that mentions the Arab phylarch is an isolated one in his *History*. This could not have been an accurate reflection of Arab participation in the campaigns of the army of the Orient in the Persian wars. The Arabs, as they normally did, must have participated annually in these campaigns. And as in the case of the Persian wars of Justinian's reign, the historian of these campaigns was ill-disposed toward the Arabs, and so Theophylact omitted or did not care about constant recording of the Arab participation. However, this single reference to phylarchs is precious since it is the sole piece of evidence for the disturbance of federate and phylarchal balance in Oriens after the Ghassānid-Byzantine encounter and substitution of other phylarchs for the rebellious Ghassānids.

## B

The Arab *foederati* figure again in the operations of the following year. In the spring of 587 they appear under the command of Andreas, who together with another commander, Theodorus, was serving under Philippicus. Philippicus placed one-third of the Roman army under the command of these two and ordered its troops to invade Persian territory, employing the tactics of sallies and raids. This detachment under the two commanders repaired the fort of Matzaron and then marched to capture Beioudaes.<sup>73</sup> This is the operation in which the Arabs fought under Andreas.

## 1

These Arabs were certainly *foederati* whose participation in operations against the Persians is attested for the preceding year by Theophylact. But whereas the historian is precise in reporting and actually names the phylarchs, Ḥujr and Ḍujum, in the operation of the preceding year, he is vague in referring to the Arabs of this operation. He describes them as "the Saracen tribe which was aiding the Romans." This circumlocution comes in the wake of the reference to Andreas, who is described as ἔρμηνεύς: ἔρμηνεύς δ' ἄρα οὗτοσι τοῦ Σαρακηνικοῦ φύλου τοῦ ἐπικουροῦντος Ῥωμαίοις.<sup>74</sup> The circumlocution on the Saracens is equivalent to their being *foederati*, and the reference to them as a tribe is normal with Theophylact in referring to the Arab *foederati*, with several parallels in his *History*.<sup>75</sup> These must have been the

<sup>73</sup> For this operation in which the Arabs were involved, see Whitby, *History*, 69–71.

<sup>74</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae* (Teubner), p. 89, lines 17–19.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283, lines 13, 15, where he uses ἔθνη in describing the Arab σύμμαχοι.

troops that had participated in the operations of 586 under their two phylarchs, and so were certainly Salīhid, at least in part, and possibly Kindite. Their assignment, "sallies and raids," conforms to what the Romans expected the Arabs to do in this theater of war. The two commanders, Andreas and Theodorus, led a third of the Roman army; so presumably those under Andreas, the Arabs, could have formed a sixth of the Roman army, that is, assuming that each commander was in charge of an equal number of troops. If so, this is a valuable datum, which brings to mind the passage in the *Chronographia* of Malalas where it is stated that at the battle of Callinicum in 531 the Arab federate contingent numbered five thousand men.<sup>76</sup>

## 2

Even more important than the military operations in which the *foederati* take part is the description of Andreas, the Roman general who was put over them, as ἑρμηνεύς, "interpreter."<sup>77</sup> The term is important in discussing the cultural life of these *foederati*. Latin was still the language of the Byzantine army in this century,<sup>78</sup> and so the conclusion that may be drawn from the passage in Theophylact is that the Arab *foederati* could not understand Latin. These were newcomers from Arabia, or relatively such, and could speak only Arabic. Even after almost a century of association with Byzantium, they could not speak Latin, and the presumption is that they could not speak Greek either. The point is of some importance to the Arab identity of the *foederati*.<sup>79</sup>

So Andreas spoke Arabic and transmitted commands and instructions to the Arab *foederati* in their own language. As it was unusual for a Greek commander to know Arabic and act as interpreter during operations, it is easier to think that he was a Rhomaic Arab who had the Greek name Andreas and who knew Greek and Latin, rather than a Greek or a Roman who had learned Arabic. That it was the Byzantine commander who acted as interpreter leads to the conclusion that the Arab phylarchs of the federate contingents, soldiers such as Ḥujr and Ḍujum, did not know Latin and Greek and so could not act as interpreters between the higher Byzantine command and their own troops. Whether this conclusion can be generalized to cover all phylarchs is not clear.

<sup>76</sup> See above, 136.

<sup>77</sup> The usual translation of the term ἑρμηνεύς is "interpreter" rather than "intermediary" as in Whitby, *History*, p. 57, line 9. The German version renders it accurately as "Dolmetscher"; see Schreiner, *Theophylaktos*, p. 74, line 36.

<sup>78</sup> For the use or survival of Latin as the language of the Byzantine army, see H. Mihaescu, "Les éléments latins des 'Tactica-strategica' de Maurice-Urbicus et leur écho en néo-grec," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 6 (1968), 481-98.

<sup>79</sup> For the cultural implication of this, see *BASIC* I.2, 835.



It appears to be true of those two, but may not be true of others. The supreme Ghassānid phylarchs certainly knew languages other than Arabic.

## C

If there is doubt about the correct tribal affiliation of the Ḥujr (Ougaros) mentioned by Theophylact for the year 586, and consequently on the Ghassānid participation in the third campaign of Philippicus, there is no doubt whatsoever that in the following year, 587, the Ghassānids were again in the service of Byzantium. The precious information comes from the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian in detailed passages that make it certain that the Ghassānids did return to the service of Byzantium.<sup>80</sup>

In his account of the attempts to reconcile the Egyptian Monophysites with the Syrian, led respectively by their patriarchs, Damian of Alexandria and Peter of Callinicum, Michael states that after much wrangling the two parties waited for the arrival of the "illustrious" phylarch Jafna (who was at Mabboug/Hierapolis) to do what he had recommended and hold the discussion where he wanted it to be held. The phylarch had the two parties meet at the Church of St. Sergius in Gābīta. During the tumultuous discussion, the phylarch was unable to impose silence on the two parties. As he was in a hurry to rejoin his troops and as he could not come to terms with Damian on where to have the two parties meet, he excused himself on the ground that seculars like himself should not correct the ecclesiastics, and so he departed irritated.<sup>81</sup> As the passage in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian contains the only explicit reference to the Ghassānids in the Syriac and Greek sources for this period in the reign of Maurice, it deserves a close analysis.

The Ghassānid affiliation of the phylarch Jafna can be predicated without any doubt.<sup>82</sup> Jafna is a resoundingly Ghassānid name, and the royal house is often referred to as the Jafnids; he was also a Monophysite, as the Ghassānids were; and, above all, he convened the meetings of the two Monophysite par-

<sup>80</sup> This conclusion is a tribute to Nöldeke's judgment and perspicacity in sensing that Byzantium must have restored the Ghassānids. He judged the situation correctly, even without knowledge of the passages in Michael the Syrian, which will be analyzed in this section; see Nöldeke, *GF*, 32–33.

<sup>81</sup> For Damian see C. D. G. Müller, "Damian, Papst und Patriarch von Alexandrien," *OC* 70 (1986), 118–42. For the precise dating of the appearance of the Ghassānid phylarch in 587, as an arbitrator between the two warring Monophysite factions, see *ibid.*, 134. The long and detailed passage involving the Ghassānid phylarch in Michael the Syrian consists of six paragraphs, for which see his *Chronicle*, II, 366–68. It is reproduced *in extenso* in *BASIC* I.2, 925–35.

<sup>82</sup> And so understood by Aigrain, Devreesse, and Honigmann in spite of some mistakes in their identifications. See Aigrain, "Arabie," col. 1217; Devreesse, *PA*, 282 note 3; E. Honigmann, "The Patriarchate of Antioch," *Traditio* 5 (1947), 135–61, esp. p. 149. For more on this, see the present writer in "The Restoration of the Ghassānid Dynasty," in *Festschrift* for Sebastian Brock (forthcoming).

ties at Gābīta/Jābiya, the well-known capital of the Ghassānids in Palaestina Secunda, in the Gaulanitis. This fairly detailed passage on the Ghassānid phylarch can, after a close scrutiny, yield the following facts.

1. Michael uses not the Syriac term for an Arab chief but the Greek *φύλαρχος*, transliterated into Syriac, because he was reproducing an official document. Furthermore, the phylarch is referred to not simply as such but with his rank in the ladder of the Byzantine titular hierarchy, namely, "illustrious," "glorious," which was the translation of either *illustris* or *gloriosissimus*.<sup>83</sup>

2. Such a rank applied to him suggests that the phylarch was a high-ranking one and not an unimportant one who usually had the rank of *clarissimus* or *spectabilis*.<sup>84</sup> This is corroborated by the fact that he came to Gābīta not from Palaestina or Arabia but from distant Mabboug, Hierapolis in Euphratesia, not far from the Euphrates. This fact, that he was stationed not in Arabia or Palaestina Secunda or Tertia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, suggests that this Ghassānid phylarch may have been the supreme phylarch who, after his return to the service, acquired, if not all, at least part of the wide authority that the Ghassānid supreme phylarch and king had held after the elevation of Arethas to the *Basileia* and supreme phylarchate around 530. It is noticeable that he is not referred to as king or *patricius*, which the Syriac documents usually apply to Ghassānids such as Arethas or Mundir, his son. This may be significant in that the term *basileus* would have returned his authority over non-Ghassānid federate troops, and so at this phase Byzantium may not have been willing to concede this privilege to the Ghassānid phylarch, especially after it had revived the power of the non-Ghassānid federates such as the Salīhids after the Ghassānid revolt.<sup>85</sup>

3. References to his troops and to Jafna's departure to his camp in far-away Euphratesia clearly suggest that the Ghassānid phylarch was not a sinecurist but was active in the service of Byzantium. He apparently was participating in the military operations of the year 587 against the Persians. Noticeable is his advanced post in Euphratesia, close to the Persian border and away from Arabia. Valuable also is the reference to Mabboug/Hierapolis in Euphratesia, a toponym to be added to the others that the Ghassānids are

<sup>83</sup> Although the translator, J. B. Chabot, varies his idiom from *illustre* to *glorieux* (*Chronique*, II, 366, 367), the Syriac uses the same term, *mshabbā*; see *ibid.*, 383, left column, lines 14, 35. For the Greek and Latin equivalents of this term, see the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," *BZ* 52 (1959), 334–35.

<sup>84</sup> For these two terms as applied to the Ghassānid phylarchs, see "The Patriciate of Arethas," 325–29. That Jafna was higher in rank than these ordinary phylarchs with lower ranks confirms Nöldeke's judgment that the Byzantines had to return to the employment of this Ghassānid leader who was "ein oberster Häuptling"; *GF*, 33.

<sup>85</sup> But it should be remembered that this is still the year 587, so close to the Ghassānid revolt. Later the Ghassānids apparently recovered more of their former power and influence, as reflected in the contemporary Arabic poetry of a decade or two later; see below, 563–68, 623–26.

associated with. What is more, it was a well-known *urban* center in Euphratesia, and not a small and unimportant place in the countryside or near the frontier in the desert where often the *ḥīra* (camp) of the Ghassānids is referred to in the sources.

4. Also striking is the Monophysitism of the phylarch. It has been suggested that the Ghassānids who remained after the revolt with Byzantium went over to the Chalcedonian position,<sup>86</sup> which may have been true of some. But the passage in Michael the Syrian strongly indicates that this Jafna, who apparently was the chief Ghassānid phylarch at this time, was strongly Monophysite. In addition, he also appears as having inherited the prestige of Arethas and Muṣṣā in presiding over church councils. Noticeable also is his impatience in dealing with the feuding Monophysite parties at Gābīta. Some military exigency may have induced him to go back to his troops in Euphratesia,<sup>87</sup> or he may have been a Ghassānid who was disillusioned with Monophysite bickering, which had led to complications with Byzantium during the reign of Muṣṣā and finally resulted in the arrest and exile of both Muṣṣā and his son Nu'mān.

Valuable as the passage in Michael the Syrian is, it does leave the question of the background of this Ghassānid phylarch, Jafna, and his sudden appearance in the service of Byzantium shrouded in obscurity. A previous section has indicated that, after the arrest of Nu'mān and the "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate, some of the phylarchs remained in the service, presumed to be Chalcedonian, others went over to the Persians, and a third party departed to South Arabia. As this phylarch was strongly Monophysite, he could have returned either from Persia or South Arabia. The chances are that he returned from the former, and there is a hint in the next passage to be analyzed that could support this contention.

## D

The revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn against the authority of Chosroes Parviz and the victory of the latter over the former in 591 is the watershed in the history of Byzantine-Persian relations during the reign of Maurice, and so it is in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations. The Arabs figure prominently during that revolt on both the Persian and Byzantine sides of the frontier.<sup>88</sup> What is relevant here is the role played by Jafna, an Arab commander in the service

<sup>86</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 34.

<sup>87</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that the Persian war of this period is conducted in the north, in Mesopotamia. But the Ghassānid phylarch had his function in the south—to keep watch over the southern flank, normally threatened by the Lakhmids.

<sup>88</sup> The Arabic sources have preserved significant details on this; see Maṣ'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dahab*, ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1966), I, 314–15. On Kābul, the people who appear with Turk (the Turks) fighting with Bahrām, see *BASIC* II.

of Byzantium, who acts as an intermediary between Chosroes when he sought the assistance of Maurice and the latter who extended assistance. The data come from a Syriac *Chronicle* and an Arabic one, both late.<sup>89</sup> Their accounts may be summarized as follows. When Chosroes decided to enlist the help of Maurice against the rebel Bahrām Chūbīn, he crossed the frontier and negotiated with one of the Arab commanders of the Romans by the name of Jafna, who thus carried Chosroes' letter to Maurice invoking his aid. Jafna also carried back to Chosroes Maurice's letter promising him help against the rebel.

Important in these accounts are the following: (1) according to the Syriac *Chronicle*, Jafna is described as "ducem exercitus Saracenorū, qui habitabat Rosaphae et erat submissus Romanis, Saracenum Christianum"; (2) his name is given in the Syriac *Chronicle* as "Abū Guphna Na<sup>c</sup>man filium Mundari"; the Arabic *Chronicle* gives his name as Jafna;<sup>90</sup> (3) in the second letter of Maurice to Chosroes, the latter is asked to proceed to Manbij (Mabboug, Hierapolis) where the Roman army will join his; (4) finally, Jafna is described as a commander, as one who "kāna istā<sup>a</sup>mana ilā al-Rūm," one who had sought protection and security with the Rūm/Romans.<sup>91</sup>

Although the Syriac and Arabic accounts are late sources, and the two are not entirely identical in the data they provide, which is not unnatural, coming as they do from two different traditions and being late, the kernel of truth in the two accounts is discernible. The preceding paragraph has salvaged from them what seemed to be solid spots from which to extract reasonably reliable data on the Arab participation in this important episode (the revolt of Bahrām) in the history of Byzantine-Sasanid relations and that of Arab-Byzantine relations during the reign of Maurice.

1. The first question that arises is that of the identity of this Arab who figured so prominently in this transaction. He is referred to as Jafna by Agapius and Abū Jafna by the Syriac *Chronicle*; "Abū" in the tecronymic is probably a mistake,<sup>92</sup> and what matters is "Jafna," most probably the name of this Arab commander. This raises the question of his identity as a Ghassānid and whether he was the same Jafna mentioned by Michael the Syrian in connection with the two feuding Monophysite parties in 587. The chances are that he was the same person. His Ghassānid affiliation is clear from the names Nu<sup>c</sup>mān and Mundīr that go with his, all Ghassānid names of recent memory. That he was the same Jafna as that of 587 may be supported by the fact that

<sup>89</sup> *Chronicum Anonymum ad Annum 1234 pertinens*, CSCO, ser. 3, vol. 14, ed. J. B. Chabot (Louvain, 1937), p. 169, lines 24–36, p. 170, lines 1–2; and Agapius, *Kitāb al-<sup>c</sup>Unwān*, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, ser. 3, ed. L. Cheikho (Paris, 1912), p. 327. On Agapius of Manbij, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 338, no. 46.

<sup>90</sup> *Chronicum Anonymum*, p. 169, lines 26–29.

<sup>91</sup> For this phrase, see *Kitāb al-<sup>c</sup>Unwān*, p. 327, line 4.

<sup>92</sup> Further on this, see below, 558–59.

the name is identical and it is difficult to believe that only four years or so later there was another, different Ghassānid with the same name; both play a crucial role on both occasions, and this suggests that the clearly identifiable Ghassānid Jafna of 587 is the same as that of 591; finally, there is Maurice's directive to Chosroes in his second letter asking him to proceed to Mabboug/Hierapolis, a place associated with the Jafna of Michael the Syrian of the year 587. All this clearly suggests that the Jafna of 587 and 591 are one and the same person.

2. The second question that now arises is how does the Jafna of 587 appear suddenly and as a Ghassānid in the service of Byzantium, whence and when after the "dissolution" of the Ghassānid phylarchate following the arrest of Munḍir and Nu'mān? A statement in the Arabic account perhaps gives the clue to answering this question, namely, that Jafna had sought security and protection from the Byzantines. He must then have been one of those Ghassānid phylarchs who, according to John of Ephesus, had defected to the Persians after the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate. That he came back to the Byzantine fold from there rather than from distant South Arabia may be inferred from the fact that Chosroes came to him as a liaison officer between him and Maurice, and this suggests some previous contact with Jafna in Persia such as his defection to Persia would explain and where he became an ally of the Persian king. So this makes it possible to reconstruct what had happened to him in Persia. As a staunch Monophysite and Christian, he probably found service with the fire-worshipping king intolerable and, as Munḍir himself had done after his revolt and withdrawal from the service in the early 570s, he decided to come back to the fold of the Christian Roman Empire, negotiate a new *modus vivendi* with Byzantium, and resume his career as a Ghassānid phylarch in the service of Byzantium. Maurice, aware that the Arab federate force in the Orient was not functioning well without the Ghassānids,<sup>93</sup> and fully engaged in a war with Persia without their federate presence, most probably decided to accept him back.<sup>94</sup>

3. The third question that arises pertains to his relation to Nu'mān and Munḍir, the Ghassānid chiefs who were arrested. A clue is given in the genealogical statement in the Syriac *Chronicle*, which, confused as it may be, does give the essential elements in his genealogy. His name was certainly Jafna, as is stated in the Arabic *Chronicle* of Agapius; clear also is the statement in the Syriac *Chronicle* that he was the son of Munḍir. This then makes him the brother of Nu'mān, mentioned also in the genealogical statement on

<sup>93</sup> Nöldeke's view, too; *GF*, 33.

<sup>94</sup> And the Byzantine authorities may even have been anxious to have back from Persia an influential phylarch who would supply them with intelligence on the military dispositions of their secular enemy.

Jafna but erroneously thought to be his name. Since it is known that Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān was now in exile in Constantinople, “Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān” in the Syriac text must be a mistake as the name of this Ghassānid figure. It is indeed possible to correct the Syriac text as Jafna, the brother<sup>95</sup> of Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān, son of Munḍir, which would thus make sense genealogically. This could be corroborated by the following: (1) Munḍir had four sons, Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān and another three, as is stated by John of Ephesus; so this could easily have been one of them, and he carries the Ghassānid name Jafna; (2) the importance that he clearly enjoyed already in 587 and in 591 suggests that he belonged to the royal house of Munḍir so closely that on his return to the service, on reacceptance by Byzantium, it was natural to endow him with the important military command that had been his father's before him.

4. Two toponyms can be recovered from the Syriac and Arabic accounts.

a. Michael the Syrian has already associated the Ghassānids with Mabboug (Hierapolis) in his account of Jafna. Now the Syriac *Chronicle* of 1234 gives the further information that Jafna resided at Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis). This does not necessarily mean that he lived in the city within its walls but more probably near it, and so the statement in the *Chronicle* becomes a perfectly credible one:<sup>96</sup> Michael the Syrian, whose account of Jafna enjoys incontestable status of historicity, associates Jafna with Hierapolis, a city of Euphratesia, and so was Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis); the Arab, especially the Ghassānid Arab, attachment to Sergiopolis is well known; Munḍir the Ghassānid chose the shrine of St. Sergius as the rendezvous with the *magister militum* Justinianus for the reconciliation in the 570s after the Ghassānid revolt and withdrawal; and outside the walls of Sergiopolis stands the *praetorium* of Munḍir with its famous Ghassānid inscription. Thus the statement in the Syriac *Chronicle* on the Ghassānid and Ruṣāfa further confirms the association of the Ghassānids with that city.

b. In the Arabic version of the account of Chosroes' appeal to Maurice for aid against Bahrām, Maurice sends instructions to Chosroes to proceed to Mabboug/Manbij/Hierapolis. This is a specificity<sup>97</sup> that further confirms the historicity of Jafna's mediation of Chosroes' appeal. Mabboug (Hierapolis) was associated with Jafna in the account of Michael the Syrian, and now Agapius refers to it again, thus further confirming this mediation on the part of Jafna

<sup>95</sup> Abū (father) in the Syriac text could be a mistake for Akhū (brother).

<sup>96</sup> For more on the association of the Ghassānids with Ruṣāfa, see *BASIC* I.2, 949–63.

<sup>97</sup> It is worth remembering that Agapius was himself the bishop of Mabboug (Hierapolis), and so he may have picked this datum up from some local history of the city. One of the manuscripts of Agapius' *Kitāb al-ʿUnwān* (Sinai Arab. 580) does not mention his episcopate over Manbij but only his provenance from that city and calls him al-Manbijī. So he is associated with Manbij, even if he was not its bishop. On this point, see M. Breydy, “Richtigstellungen über Agapius von Manbig und sein historisches Werk,” *OC* 73 (1989), 92.



and, what is more, suggesting that Jafna probably played an important role in the operations that finally restored the throne to Chosroes. What emerges from all this is that the Ghassānids in the late 580s and early 590s had a strong military presence in faraway Euphratesia, in connection with both the Persian wars and the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn. The toponymic precision afforded by the two references to Hierapolis and Sergiopolis is welcome, coming as it does from the Syriac sources which, like the Greek, rarely give precise information on the whereabouts of the Ghassānids.

Jafna disappears<sup>98</sup> from the sources after the reference to him in these two Syriac accounts in connection with Chosroes' appeal to Maurice which resulted in the defeat of Bahrām and the restoration of Chosroes. But in this important historical sequence of events, Jafna played an important part and presumably took part with his Ghassānids in the joint Perso-Byzantine expedition that finally defeated Bahrām near Canzak in the late summer of 591. He was clearly a large historical figure, and knowledge of his place in Arab-Byzantine relations is owed to Michael the Syrian, who thus fills this gap in the history of these relations. One further gain<sup>99</sup> from Michael's *Chronicle* may be registered, namely, the addition of another authentic name to the list of Ghassānid rulers which Nöldeke compiled and which was necessarily very short, compiled in full conformity with his rigorous methodology.<sup>100</sup>

## E

The peace with Persia in 591 naturally had important consequences for Byzantine-Persian relations and also for Arab-Byzantine relations. As the Arabs receive mention in the sources because of the Persian wars, the sources are naturally silent on them for the second decade of Maurice's reign. And yet before that reign ended, Theophylact noticed the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in connection with disturbing the peace that obtained between the two world powers, although the peace eventually was not disturbed as wiser counsels prevailed: "In these very times Chosroes, the king of the Persians, tried to defile the peace. The barbarian's reason was in fact roughly this: many different nations are native to Arabia, whom the masses are accustomed to call Saracens; some of these particular nations were Roman allies; a subdivision of these went into Persia during the time of the peace, and in their sally ravaged

<sup>98</sup> It is not inconceivable that he died soon after, a fate that befell the Ghassānid leader who had been chosen to succeed Muḥammad following the latter's arrest and who died only ten days after his installment. Alternatively, the return of Nu'mān from captivity in Constantinople and his restoration as supreme phylarch would have eclipsed Jafna; hence his disappearance from the sources. On the possibility that Nu'mān was returned by Maurice in the 590s, see below, 563–68.

<sup>99</sup> His name also raises the question whether he became the eponym of a branch of the Ghassānid house, called in the Arabic sources "the sons of Jafna"; on this see *BASIC II*.

<sup>100</sup> For this short list, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 53.

certain parts of Babylonia. Hence Chosroes decided to be aggrieved."<sup>101</sup> The date in Theophylact is 598 but, as M. Whitby observes, it is more likely datable to the end of Maurice's reign.<sup>102</sup> These Saracens to whom Theophylact refers are clearly *foederati*, since they are called by the technical term *symmacha*: ἐκ τούτων δὴ τῶν ἔθνῶν ἐνιά τινα τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις σύμμαχα ἦν.<sup>103</sup>

The passage lacks precision as to who these *foederati* were, and the historian speaks of various groups among them. Unlike the other passage analyzed above, which is precise in its reference to the names of the phylarchs, this one leaves them anonymous.<sup>104</sup> Nöldeke thought he could see in it an echo of what the Arab poet Nābigha says about one of the Ghassānids,<sup>105</sup> but he presented his thought only as a possibility. However, Nöldeke's guess may be supported by the fact that the Arab poet specifies the area that the Ghassānid commander invaded, namely, Iraq, and this answers exactly to the area that Theophylact, too, specifies, Babylonia, as the area which the Arabs of the Romans invaded. However, certainty cannot be predicated of the confrontation of the two sources, which must remain only a possibility, as Nöldeke himself observed.

The incursion of the Roman Arabs into Persian territory, reported by Theophylact, is therefore likely to have been a local one, typical of frontier warfare in that century, for which there are precedents.<sup>106</sup> It is reminiscent of the *Strata* dispute of 539 between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Mundir,<sup>107</sup> in that it involved the two powers. The *Strata* dispute, however, became the ostensible cause of the second Persian war of Justinian's reign, whereas this one did not serve as a *casus belli*.

The Arab *foederati* of Byzantium observed the peace that had been concluded between the two world powers and which lasted during the second decade of the reign of Maurice. The Byzantine sources are therefore understandably silent on any campaigns in their military history, but the Arabic ones are not so silent. Contemporary Arabic poetry describes the campaigns of the Ghassānids in northwest Arabia in the region of Ḥijāz against the Arab pastoralists of that area. It is not certain exactly when these campaigns were conducted, whether in this decade or in the reign of Phocas, but the chances are that they were conducted in this decade, since the services of the Ghas-

<sup>101</sup> Whitby, *History*, 209.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, note 1. Ca. A.D. 600 would be the most convenient dating, as in Nöldeke, *GF*, 39.

<sup>103</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae* (Teubner), p. 283, lines 15–16.

<sup>104</sup> On the other hand, it expresses perhaps the multi-tribal structure of the Arab federate presence in Oriens, which comes to the fore in this period after the dissolution of the Ghassānid phylarchate.

<sup>105</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, p. 39, lines 5–6.

<sup>106</sup> For similar border incidents, involving the Persian Arabs and the Roman Arabs which did not disturb the peace, see *BAFIC*, 115–19.

<sup>107</sup> On the *Strata* dispute of 539, see above, 209–19.

sānids would have been needed in the war against Persia which broke out after the death of Maurice.<sup>108</sup>

#### VI. THE RESTORATION OF THE GHASSĀNIDS

The myth that the Ghassānids were liquidated by Maurice and that they irretrievably disappeared from the scene of Arab-Byzantine relations is mainly due to John of Ephesus. The justified prestige of the ecclesiastical writer as a primary source for Ghassānid history has helped perpetuate this erroneous view, especially as he wrote a chapter that bore directly on this, entitled "the rise and fall"<sup>109</sup> of the Ghassānids. This view was parroted uncritically by historians, especially non-specialists in Arab-Byzantine relations, including P. Goubert, who gave it currency with such alarmist titles in sections of his book as "la fin des Ghassanides."<sup>110</sup> Careful writers, notably R. Aigrain, to whom is owed the brilliant and monumental article "Arabie," avoided such mistakes as Goubert indulged in, yet treated the Ghassānid presence for the quarter century after the exile of Muḏīr unceremoniously but understandably so.<sup>111</sup> The restored Ghassānid presence later in the reign of Maurice asserted itself in the Arabian Peninsula, not in the course of the Persian-Byzantine conflict, and was documented in difficult Arabic sources, contemporary pre-Islamic poetry. Nöldeke, however, with his usual thoroughness and perspicacity, drew the broad lines of the Ghassānid restoration even though the crucial passage in Michael the Syrian on Jafna was unknown to him and he had to depend mainly on the Arabic sources.<sup>112</sup> These, together with the Greek and Syriac sources, can now be drawn upon in order to establish and emphasize the fact of the Ghassānid restoration, thus counteracting the misconceptions generated by such titles as "la fin des Ghassanides."

The large gap in the sources for the Ghassānid presence in Oriens between the last chapters of the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus and the Arabic sources—contemporary pre-Islamic poetry of the years around A.D. 600—is now filled by the purple patch in the Syriac *Chronicle* of Michael on Jafna in 587. This, as well as the other references to Jafna, in connection with the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn, has been intensively analyzed in the previous section, while the contemporary Arabic sources have been touched upon only to suggest that the strong Ghassānid presence reflected in them, especially in the poetry of Nābigha, may be assigned to the last decade of Maurice's reign.<sup>113</sup> This section will therefore be devoted to making some general observations on

<sup>108</sup> For these campaigns, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>109</sup> See above, 541–42.

<sup>110</sup> See Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, I, 259.

<sup>111</sup> See Aigrain, "Arabie," *DHGE*, III, col. 1218. Besides, he misconstrued the precious references in Michael the Syrian to Jafna, as has been explained, above, note 82.

<sup>112</sup> See *GF*, 32–33.

<sup>113</sup> This contemporary poetry will be analyzed in detail in *BASIC II*.

this restored Ghassānid phylarchate and discussing the question of the later fortunes of Nu'mān.

After about three years of a Ghassānid interregnum, Maurice apparently decided that he could not do without the Ghassānid shield which had protected Oriens for at least fifty years. Apparently, the performance of the non-Ghassānid phylarchate represented by the Salīhids and others, such as the Kindites and the Tanūkhids, was not sufficient for the defense of Oriens. This would explain the sudden appearance of the Ghassānids in 587 under Jafna. The question that inevitably arises is whether or not they were restored to their former power. This cannot be answered with certainty since the Greek sources are silent on the Ghassānids in this period, and one must operate only with inferences made from the Arabic sources alone. Luckily the passage in Michael the Syrian that proved so valuable for dating the Ghassānid restoration provides some clues for answering this question. As has been pointed out, this passage comes from a document, the letter of Peter of Callinicum, and it has been argued that the language of the patriarch in the letter is extremely precise and official. In that document, Jafna does not appear as a *basileus*, *malkā*, or *patricius* but simply as phylarch with the rank of either *illustris* or *gloriosissimus*, a rank higher than that of the ordinary phylarch, which was *clarissimus* or even the higher *spectabilis*. The presumption is that Maurice restored the phylarchate but not the *Basileia* which Justinian had conferred on Arethas ca. 530. Reference to the Ghassānids as kings and the bearers of crowns appears in the poetry of Ḥassān, the later poet, but not in the earlier one, Nābigha. A good guess is that Maurice downgraded the Ghassānid phylarchate but that later Phocas restored it to its former status.<sup>114</sup> On the doctrinal persuasion of the restored Ghassānids in this period, the presumption that some of them, or those who were retained in the service after the dissolution of the phylarchate, were Chalcedonians or went over to the Chalcedonian position has to be abandoned. The passage in Michael on Jafna makes it amply clear that the restored Ghassānid phylarch was Monophysite, and so much so that he appears as a power in the Monophysite feuds and an arbitrator, exactly as Mundir and Arethas before him had been. Perhaps the death in 593 of their inveterate ecclesiastical enemy, Gregory, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, removed from the scene one of the principal thorns in the side of Monophysitism in Oriens and its protectors, the Ghassānids.

#### Nu'mān

The last mention of Nu'mān in the Greek sources is in Evagrius, in the passage analyzed in the previous section which speaks of him and his father Mundir. The tense system of the passage is valuable as it uses the aorist in

<sup>114</sup> On the reign of Phocas, see below, 618–32.

speaking of the arrest and exile of Mundir, whereas it uses the present in describing the arrest of Nu'mān and his condition when Evagrius wrote the passage.<sup>115</sup> The conclusion that may be safely drawn from this careful use of tenses is that Nu'mān was alive when Evagrius wrote that passage. When exactly in the reign of Maurice did Evagrius write his *History* or at least that passage? This is a matter of some importance for discussing the later fortunes of Nu'mān in the last decade of Maurice's reign.

Presumably on the strength of two sentences in the last two chapters of Evagrius' *History*, Nöldeke concluded that he was writing in the early 590s, ca. 593/94, and that Nu'mān was still alive and in Constantinople at that time.<sup>116</sup> Nöldeke was probably right in his conclusion. The two sentences that give some chronological indications on when Evagrius wrote his *History* may be found in Book V, chapter 24 and Book VI, chapter 24. In the first, he speaks of the *History* of his relative, John of Epiphania, as not having been published yet, and the latter's *History* treated the twenty years of the Persian war from 572 to 592; in the second, he speaks of his having finished his *History* in the twelfth year of the reign of Maurice, which may thus be dated 593/94. But the question arises as to whether this applies to the last portion of Evagrius' *History* or to the *History* in its entirety. There is no way of deciding this since he may have written portions earlier than the 590s. The crucial passage on the two Saracens, Mundir and Nu'mān, however, does pertain to the last book of his *History* and thus to the first decade of Maurice's reign, certainly in the late 580s or early 590s, that is, after the exile of Mundir, the Ghassānid revolt, and the arrest of Nu'mān and his detention in Constantinople.

That the passage relates to the 590s rather than to the late 580s may be supported by the fact that while it is explicitly stated that Mundir was exiled to Sicily, the same is not stated of Nu'mān; his place of exile remained Constantinople.<sup>117</sup> The Ghassānid presence in the late 580s is represented by Jafna and not by Nu'mān, which would not have been the case if Nu'mān had returned to Oriens at that time. So chances are that Nu'mān was still in exile in Constantinople in the early 590s when Evagrius finished his *History*.

If Nu'mān was still alive in Constantinople in the early 590s, did Maurice allow him to return to Oriens? This is a possibility that was not entertained by Nöldeke who was understandably hesitant to explore further the later fortunes of Nu'mān. A poem of Nābigha, one of the two major poets who composed verses on the Ghassānids in the period ca. A.D. 600, is on a Ghassānid Nu'mān. It aroused Nöldeke's curiosity, but he ultimately rejected

<sup>115</sup> See above, 534.

<sup>116</sup> See *GF*, 30.

<sup>117</sup> It is noteworthy that there is no reference to him in Pope Gregory's letter to Innocentius in A.D. 600, as there is to Mundir; see below, 602-5.

it as a poem on this Nu'mān, the son of Mundir.<sup>118</sup> Yet a closer examination of the poem reveals that its subject is indeed this same Nu'mān. The exploration of whether or not Nu'mān was released from his exile must then begin with a discussion of this poem.

1. The poem, which is a fragment or a short poem of five verses, speaks of a Ghassānid Nu'mān and is expressed syntactically in the form of a disjunction, either/or: if he returns, *yarji*<sup>c</sup>, there will be rejoicing; if he dies *yablik* (a violent death), there will be grief and sorrow. Nöldeke, strangely enough, thought that the Ghassānid Nu'mān in the poem was away and was ill, so the disjunction in the poem involved sickness and recuperation from ill health. But the fragment is singularly free from reference to sickness, and indeed its meaning is clear, especially with the two crucial verbs around which the disjunction turns: *yarji*<sup>c</sup> simply signifies "returning home" and not "recovering from illness."<sup>119</sup> *Yablik*, too, implies more "dying a violent death"<sup>120</sup> rather than from sickness, although it could mean simply to die naturally or after an illness. So the decisive verb is the first, *yarji*<sup>c</sup>, "returns." This fits in extremely well with Nu'mān's arrest and exile to Constantinople as the center of the disjunction. Not only the verb but the first two verses translated by Nöldeke suggest this too, since the death of a Ghassānid chief from natural causes would not have been followed by the disappearance of the dynasty or loss of its standing as expressed in the two verses, but only in the accession of a new chief who would continue the tradition of the Ghassānid monarchy. The meaning of the verses eluded Nöldeke or did not carry conviction with him because he was hesitant to draw the conclusion on the identification of the Nu'mān of Evagrius and John of Ephesus with his namesake in Nābigha's Arabic poem. This conclusion is not absolutely certain but is very probable, since it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to imagine a situation to which the poem refers other than the arrest and exile of Nu'mān and the consternation that this caused among the Ghassānids.<sup>121</sup> Alternatively, the poem expresses hope for his return in the early 590s when attempts to restore him were possibly made.

2. The poem leaves Nu'mān's return from exile open, but the possibility

<sup>118</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 38 and note 3, where he translated the first two verses into German. The poem will be discussed from other points of view in the section on the Arabic sources in *BASIC II*.

<sup>119</sup> For which the usual words are *yabra'*, *yushfā*, *yu'āfā*, etc., but not *yarji*<sup>c</sup>, hardly the *mot juste* in the lexicon of Nābigha, the foremost poet of his time.

<sup>120</sup> Such as would have been the fate of one in Constantinople who had been declared a rebellious chief and had been accused of *prodosia*.

<sup>121</sup> If this conclusion turns out to be absolutely certain, this poem will emerge as the earliest surviving fragment of Nābigha on the Ghassānids, since it can be dated to the early 580s.



that he was returned may be argued for from various indications in the Arabic and Syriac sources. The reappearance of the Ghassānids on the stage of Arab-Byzantine relations in the late 580s and the early 590s represented by Jafna and, what is more, in the good graces of Maurice, provides some strong support for the return of Nu'mān. The members of the Ghassānid royal house were bound to one another by strong ties of kinship. It is natural to assume that Jafna who, as has been argued, did Maurice a good turn in the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn, would have appealed to Maurice for the return of the chief Ghassānid leader from his exile in Constantinople, especially if Jafna was indeed his own brother, as has also been argued. After the arrest of Munḍir, his sons revolted, and their first and most insistent demand was the return of their father.<sup>122</sup> Later in the century around the year 600, and more relevantly for this discussion, attempts were made for the restoration of Munḍir himself and his return from Sicily in which Pope Gregory was involved.<sup>123</sup> So the much simpler operation of returning Nu'mān from Constantinople could have been put in motion in Oriens by Jafna, especially after the restoration of the status quo and the resolution of Ghassānid-Byzantine differences. Maurice himself harbored no great rancor toward Nu'mān; his bitterness was directed toward his father, Munḍir, whom he kept in exile until the end of his reign. In fact he was interested in the services of Nu'mān when the two met in Constantinople before the latter's arrest; the only bone of contention was his doctrinal persuasion.

3. The possibility that Nu'mān was returned by Maurice in the 590s must, therefore, be entertained. Nābigha composed a number of poems on a Ghassānid Nu'mān,<sup>124</sup> more than he composed on any other Ghassānid ruler, and they could point to the correctness of the identification of his Nu'mān with that of John of Ephesus and Evagrius, the exile returned from Constantinople.

a. Nābigha was the older contemporary of Ḥassān,<sup>125</sup> the other poet of the Ghassānids in the years around A.D. 600. And so he is likely to have composed his poems in the last decade of the sixth century before Ḥassān did his, and before disaster befell both Byzantium and the Ghassānids with the Persian occupation of Oriens in the early years of Heraclius' reign. So the chances are that Nābigha composed most of his poems in the last decade of the sixth century rather than in the first decade of the seventh, when Ḥassān must have composed most of his poems on the Ghassānids. This brings

<sup>122</sup> The demands they made of the Byzantine authorities were not for the release and return of Munḍir as king of the Arabs or *patricius* but for "our father"; see above, 468.

<sup>123</sup> For this see below, 602–5.

<sup>124</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 38–40; further on these, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>125</sup> On these two poets as the panegyrists of the Ghassānids, see *BASIC* II.

Nābigha's poems close to a Nu'mān who, as has been argued, could have returned to Oriens from Constantinople in the early 590s.

b. This chronological argument is further confirmed by the fact that this Nu'mān in Nābigha's poem appears older than the other Ghassānid figures that Nābigha and Ḥassān mention in their poetry. Specifically, he appears in Nābigha's poem as the father of Ḥujr,<sup>126</sup> who most probably is the one mentioned by Ḥassān for the first decade of the seventh century. So this, too, places Nu'mān in the last decade of the sixth century, again close to the Nu'mān who might have returned from exile in the same decade.

c. The name of a Ghassānid chief in this period, Nu'mān, is to be met with only once, applied to one ruler,<sup>127</sup> while Ḥārith (Arethas) is applied to three rulers or chiefs, or at least two. This narrows down the possibility of error in the identification. Nu'mān appears in the poems of Nābigha as an exceptionally redoubtable warrior, and this answers to the description of Nu'mān in John of Ephesus as a warrior even more redoubtable than his father, Munḍir.<sup>128</sup>

d. The campaigns of Nu'mān as described by Nābigha all take place in Arabia, especially in Ḥijāz,<sup>129</sup> and not against the Persians or the Lakhmids. This suggests the last decade of the sixth century when the Persian front was non-operational; and so the Ghassānids could turn their attention to, and concentrate on, the Arabian front. This too brings the two Nu'māns of the Arabic and the Greek sources closer chronologically.

e. Finally, Nābigha composed an elegy on the death of his Nu'mān.<sup>130</sup> This too is relevant. It suggests that his *floruit* as a Ghassānid chief was this last decade of the century since Nābigha died ca. A.D. 600. Even the fact of his death could support the identification of the two Nu'māns. The son of Munḍir had lived in Oriens near the Arabian desert all his life and was used to that hot, dry climate, when suddenly he was exiled for some ten years to Constantinople, a humid and cold climate in the northern latitude. It is possible that his long stay in Constantinople adversely affected his health.

The cumulative evidence thus suggests that the two Nu'māns could be identical. This conclusion is not absolutely certain but very probable. Around the year 600, attempts were also made to have the sentence of Munḍir's exile rescinded, but Maurice remained adamant. Munḍir, however, returned at the

<sup>126</sup> On Nu'mān's toponymic as Abū Ḥujr, see Nöldeke, *GF*, 39, 40.

<sup>127</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 33–35.

<sup>128</sup> See above, 464.

<sup>129</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 38–40, where he places the reign of the Nu'mān eulogized by Nābigha in the first decade of the 7th century. This must remain a possibility, although this section has cast some serious doubts on this chronology. For more on this, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>130</sup> It elicited Nöldeke's admiration; see *GF*, 38–39. Further on this elegy, see *BASIC II*.

beginning of the reign of Phocas.<sup>131</sup> Thus there was again a succession of Ghassānid leaders in Oriens, in the period from 587 to 602, during which Jafna returned and possibly Nuʿmān, and finally Mundir himself, with incontrovertible evidence from the Syriac and Arabic sources that Ghassānid-Byzantine relations were restored not long after they had been severed in the early 580s.

## VII. THE *STRATĒGIKON*

Although there is no single mention of the Arabs in the *Stratēgikon*,<sup>132</sup> that well-known military manual, the work is important to the Arab-Byzantine relationship in both the sixth and seventh centuries. Some scholars have ascribed it to Maurice, whose Arab policy has been described in this volume. Although this attribution has generally been rejected, many believe it was written during his reign.<sup>133</sup> So Maurice is associated with the *Stratēgikon* in one way or another, and in view of his anti-Ghassānid policy it is necessary to give some attention to it with special reference to the Arab dimensions that admit of being explored.

### A

Although no one believes nowadays that the work was written in the early eighth century, a view sponsored and popularized among Western medievalists by Lynn White,<sup>134</sup> it is necessary to discuss its authorship first in chronological terms, by the application of some acid tests to support the view that it was a work written in the proto-Byzantine period around the year 600. The *ethnika* in the work clearly indicates this since there is a section on the

<sup>131</sup> For the negotiations to restore Mundir and for his return, see below, 618–22.

<sup>132</sup> For the text and German translation, see G. T. Dennis and E. Gamillscheg, *Das Stratēgikon des Maurikios*, CFHB 17 (Vienna, 1981). For the English translation, see G. T. Dennis, *Maurice's Stratēgikon* (Philadelphia, 1984). Reference to the *Stratēgikon* in this chapter will be to the English version of Dennis; when a discussion of the Greek original is involved, the Vienna edition of the *Stratēgikon* will be referred to.

<sup>133</sup> For the question of authorship, see Dennis, *Maurice's Stratēgikon*, xvi–xxvii and most recently, Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian* (Oxford, 1988), 130–32 and passim. In addition, see J. E. Wiita, *The Ethnika in Byzantine Military Treatises*, Ph.D. diss. (Univ. of Minnesota, 1977), 15–49; A. D. H. Bivar, "Cavalry Equipment and Tactics along the Euphrates Frontier," *DOP* 26 (1972), 271–91; A. Kollautz, "Das militärwissenschaftliche Werk des sogenannten Maurikios," *BYZANTIACA* 5 (1985), 87–135. See also the insightful comments of G. Dagron on the question of the "relative modernité" of the military treatises, including the *Stratēgikon*, in *Le traité sur la guérilla (De velitatione) de l'empereur Nicéphore Phocas (963–969)* (Paris, 1986), 139–44. For the latest on the *Stratēgikon*, see Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 130–32.

<sup>134</sup> See Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford, 1962), 20–21; for the documentation of the views of those who have argued for a period later than the traditional date ca. 600 and on whom White depended, see *ibid.*, 144 note 1.

Persians and how to fight them.<sup>135</sup> These could only be the Sasanids, Byzantium's neighbors in the proto-Byzantine period whose imperial days ended in the seventh century with the rise of Islam. So a Byzantine military manual that treats the Persians, and gives them prominence by treating them before all the other ethnic groups, could only have been written in this period, before the fall of the Sasanids. Furthermore, the prologue to Book XI on the *ethnika* states: "The purpose of this chapter is to enable those who intend to wage war against these peoples to prepare themselves properly."<sup>136</sup>

Perhaps even more important is the silence of the *Stratēgikon* on the Arabs. After the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests, the Arabs became the main antagonists of the Byzantines: Byzantium and the Islamic caliphate became the two superpowers. A work that does not mention the Arabs must surely be assigned to the period that preceded the rise of the Arabs as a world power, that is, before the seventh century.<sup>137</sup> Thus this combination of pointed reference to the Persians and complete silence on the Arabs leads to the certain conclusion that this military manual was written before the end of the Sasanid period, that is, in the pre-Islamic period of Near Eastern history.

The author of the *Stratēgikon* remains unknown despite the names that have been suggested: Maurice, Philippicus the general and Maurice's brother-in-law, and Heraclius himself. The first may be safely left out of consideration; the *Stratēgikon* is a military manual written by a soldier, especially one who fought in the West and the Balkans, as is clear from the chapter on the *ethnika* and the short biographical note at the end of the chapter. Maurice had no military background. He had been a *notarius* before he was called by Tiberius to become *magister militum per Orientem* for some four years, and he never fought in the West. The case for Philippicus is much stronger, but his candidacy for authorship has also not been generally accepted. So the author remains unknown,<sup>138</sup> but to the list of the three suggested above, one may add Justinianus, the son of Germanus, Justinian's nephew. The case for him may be stated as follows.

1. The *Stratēgikon* is the work of a professional soldier who is thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the art of war and, what is more, one who fought on both fronts, in the West, especially the Balkans, and in the East, against the Persians. Justinianus answers to this description admirably; especially relevant is the range of his military activities in the West which includes the

<sup>135</sup> *Stratēgikon*, XL.1, pp. 113–15.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>137</sup> Conversely, this argument on the Arabs is another acid test for arguing that another military manual, the *Peri Stratēgeias*, must belong to the Islamic period and not to the pre-Islamic 6th century; see below, 582–88.

<sup>138</sup> On the authorship, see above, notes 133–34.

Avars and which dwarfs those of Philippicus, who fought almost exclusively in the East but only once, toward the end of the century, against the Bulgars.<sup>139</sup> This is a relevant background for the author of this military manual, who devotes most of the discussion of the *ethnika* in his work to the peoples of the West and the Balkans.<sup>140</sup>

2. The autobiographical note at the end of the chapter on the *ethnika* throws some light on the identity of the author in a way that discussions of weaponry or army units in war do not: "Now then, we have reflected on these topics to the best of our ability, drawing on our own experience and on the authorities of the past, and we have written down these reflections for the benefit of whoever may read them."<sup>141</sup>

3. Finally, it is noteworthy that Justinianus was not only an officer with a distinguished military career but also came from a family of distinguished professional soldiers; his father was Germanus and his brother was Justin. Moreover, they were related to the Byzantine royal house since Germanus was the cousin of Emperor Justinian. They were thus influential Byzantine citizens with concern for the empire, and the *Stratēgikon* breathes this spirit. All these considerations could suggest that Justinianus was the kind of officer who would write such a manual as the *Stratēgikon* in which he could include the experience of both his father and his brother, with both of whom he campaigned.<sup>142</sup> When he might have written the manual is not clear. It is possible that he wrote it after his retirement from the army, which took place not long after he won the battle of Melitene against the Persians in 575.

The question of chronological indications in the work must arise. They have been noted by both G. Dennis and M. Whitby, and the latter concluded that the author most probably lived in the latter part of Maurice's reign, in the last decade of the sixth century.<sup>143</sup> But the *Stratēgikon* is a composite work, as indicated by the author who says he composed it from personal experience and from what earlier authors had written on the subject of war. So when the manual was used later by others, these added new material to it in the light of their own experiences. The author of the *Stratēgikon* thus remains unknown,

<sup>139</sup> For his campaign against the Bulgars, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 374–75.

<sup>140</sup> See the many pages on the Western *ethnika* in the *Stratēgikon*, 116–26, compared to the two pages on the Persians in the East, pp. 113–15.

<sup>141</sup> See *Stratēgikon*, 126. The "other authorities of the past" possibly included the 6th-century tactician Urbicius; see *ibid.*, xv.

<sup>142</sup> On Germanus see *PLRE*, II, s.v.; on Justinianus and his brother Justin, see *PLRE*, III, svv. Noteworthy is his brother Justin's campaign against the Avars, which Evagrius recorded and which is specially important since it was the first Byzantine-Avar encounter that took place at the beginning of Justin II's reign; see Evagrius, *HE*, V.1. The father, Germanus, fought against the Antae and the Slavs, two peoples mentioned in the *ethnika* of the *Stratēgikon*.

<sup>143</sup> See Dennis, *Stratēgikon*, xvi, and Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 130–32.

but he must have been one of the distinguished commanders of the period, such as Justinianus or Philippicus.

## B

Although the Arabs are not explicitly mentioned in the *Stratēgikon*, they are most probably referred to in some of its passages concerning the “allies,” σύμμαχοι.<sup>144</sup> Most of these references to allies are uncomplimentary, and some of them most likely refer to the Arab allies of Byzantium. In this period the Arab allies fell out with Byzantium: their leader was accused of *prodosia*, captured, and banished. His son raised the standard of revolt against Byzantium, raided Oriens, besieged Bostra, and defeated the provincial army of Arabia, whose *dux* was killed in the fray. The paragraphs that speak of the allies<sup>145</sup> pejoratively may be presented as follows.

1. Suspicion of the allies: “About a mile away from them our second line should slow down, gradually drop behind the first line to the proper distance, and assume its normal formation. This makes it difficult for the enemy, or even for our own allies, to get a clear idea of how we are disposing our troops.”<sup>146</sup>

2. Suspicion of an extreme degree: “We should not furnish arms to those who promise to fight on our side because their real intentions are not clear.”<sup>147</sup>

3. Distrust of allies (in Book VIII): (a) “A prudent commander will not lead an allied force into his own country if it is larger than his own army. Otherwise it might mutiny, drive out the native troops, and take over the country.” (b) “When possible, an allied force should be composed of various nationalities to reduce the danger of its men uniting for some evil purpose.”<sup>148</sup>

4. Further distrust (also in Book VIII): “Allied forces should not be mixed in with our own troops. They should set up camp and march separately. It is most important that we hide our formations and methods of

<sup>144</sup> Or some other word derivative from the same root; συμμαχεῖν, συμμαχία, συμμαχικός.

<sup>145</sup> To be distinguished from paragraphs that also speak pejoratively, in the chapter on the *ethnika*, of the Scythians and the Slavs. These were hostile peoples who were warring with Byzantium, and not allies, σύμμαχοι, as the Ghassānid Arabs were. For references to the Scythians and the Slavs, see Dennis, *Stratēgikon*, 116, 122, where the term that describes them is ἄπιστοι.

It was not unnatural for the Byzantine writers to view these hostile barbarians as treacherous and unreliable. But the case of the *allies* referred to in the following paragraphs is different. One would expect their description to be expressed in different terms, but it is not, and so it is significant, deriving probably from the bitter memories of the Ghassānid revolt.

<sup>146</sup> Dennis, *Stratēgikon*, p. 70, no. 4.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82, no. 31, “those who promise to fight on our side” translates Greek τοὺς συμμαχεῖν ἐπαγγελλομένους, so they are allies, σύμμαχοι. For the phrase in Greek, see *Das Stratēgikon*, p. 274, no. 31. This may be an implied dig at the Ghassānids.

<sup>148</sup> Dennis, *Stratēgikon*, p. 84, no. 17.



warfare from them, for if they ever turn against us, they may use their knowledge of these to hurt us."<sup>149</sup>

It is quite likely that some of these passages refer to the Arabs represented by the Ghassānids, especially since the Ghassānid revolt took place in the very period during which the *Stratēgikon* is said to have been composed, the last quarter of the sixth century. An author concerned about the security of the Byzantine state and the dangers attendant on such revolts could not but reflect such concern in his manual. So it is quite possible that repercussions of this revolt found their way into the *Stratēgikon*. This again raises the question of authorship and the one responsible for these paragraphs. They could not have been written by Justinianus<sup>150</sup> who was on good terms with the Arabs, for he was the liaison officer between Mundir and Justin II in 575. If he is the author, then a later hand must have added these paragraphs; the *Stratēgikon*, as has been mentioned, is a composite work. No Byzantine of this period qualifies better than Maurice as the one who could have added these paragraphs on the allies; his bitter animosity toward Mundir and the Ghassānid allies has been discussed in the preceding sections. So it is quite likely that these uncomplimentary paragraphs on the allies came from Maurice or were inspired by him. Philippicus, one of the authors suggested for the *Stratēgikon*, was his brother-in-law, the husband of his sister Gordia.

## C

In addition to the paragraphs on the allies, the *symmachoi*, involving the Arabs, there are two on the stirrup, which also have an Arab dimension to them, since the discussion of the appearance of the stirrup in the Near East and its diffusion in the sixth/seventh centuries has involved the Arabs.

### 1

The stirrup (*scala*) is mentioned in two paragraphs of the *Stratēgikon*. Now that this military manual has definitely been dated to ca. 600, either a quarter century before or after, these two paragraphs assume great importance in deciding when the stirrup appeared in Byzantium and when and how it was mediated through Byzantium to other peoples in the Near East, especially the Arabs. The *Stratēgikon* is thus the most important source for this controversial question, so it is well to quote the two relevant paragraphs here.<sup>151</sup>

The first of the two paragraphs on the saddle occurs in Book I:

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 89, no. 80.

<sup>150</sup> That is, assuming that he was the author of the manual.

<sup>151</sup> Especially as it was obscured by Lynn White because of his acceptance of a wrong dating for the *Stratēgikon* (above, note 134), and it does not figure prominently in Bivar's "Cavalry Equipment and Tactics."

The saddles should have large and thick cloths; the bridles should be of good quality; attached to the saddles should be two iron stirrups, a lasso with thong, hobble, a saddle bag large enough to hold three or four days' rations for the soldier when needed. There should be four tassels on the back strap, one on top of the head, and one under the chin.<sup>152</sup>

The second occurs in Book II:

To make it easier for the corpsmen and the wounded or fallen to mount the rescue horses, they should place both stirrups on the left side of the saddle, one to the front, as is customary, the other behind it. When two want to get up on the horse, the corpsman and the man who is out of action, the first mounts by the regular stirrup to the front, the other by the one to the back. It is also essential that they carry flasks of water for men who may be fainting from their wounds.<sup>153</sup>

There is no doubt that the two paragraphs on the stirrup are not later interpolations but belong to the *Stratēgikon* as composed ca. A.D. 600. The paragraphs clearly belong to the two chapters in which they are set, and they are related to the references to the Avars in the *ethnika* of the *Stratēgikon*. It is generally recognized that the Avars brought the stirrup to the Balkans, whence Byzantium adopted it. This is also consonant with the fact that the commanders of the period who are associated with the *Stratēgikon* and its composition are known to have fought the Avars in the Balkans and along the Danube—Justinianus, Philippicus, and Heraclius himself.

Before treating the Arab dimension of the stirrup, a few general observations may be made on it in light of these two paragraphs.

1. Although the stirrup is most probably an importation from the Avars, there is no reference to it in the section on them in the *ethnika* of the *Stratēgikon*.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps the omission is not significant.

2. Noteworthy is the fact that the Byzantine rider was also provided with a lasso (σόκκος), more accurately, a lasso with a thong (λωρόσοκκος).<sup>155</sup> The lasso was known to the Inner Asian warrior, to the Avars and the Parthians, and this raises the question whether the Byzantine lasso was also associated with the Avars.<sup>156</sup>

<sup>152</sup> *Stratēgikon*, 13.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>154</sup> The proud Roman author of the manual may not have wanted his reader to infer that the stirrup, as part of the harness of the Roman horse, was an adoption from the nomadic, uncivilized Avars.

<sup>155</sup> See *Das Stratēgikon*, p. 80, line 8.

<sup>156</sup> On the lasso as part of the weapons of the Inner Asian warrior, see D. Sinor, "The Inner Asian Warrior," *JAOs* 11 (1981), 141–42, where its users are enumerated: Parthians, Alans, and Huns.

3. The name of the stirrup is still *scala* (ladder), an indication that the more important function of the stirrup was to enable the cavalryman to mount his horse. The same applies to the Arabic name for the stirrup, *rikāb*.

4. This leads to the question of the stirrup and "anchorage." As is well known, horsemen had wielded their lances and brandished their swords without the aid of the stirrup, but there is no doubt that it gave better stability on the horse and more "anchorage." The mounted warrior could now use his sword against the infantry of the enemy by leaning over and cutting a wide swath without falling off his horse. He could also wield his lance or spear more effectively. According to one medievalist, the stirrup made mounted "shock combat" possible.<sup>157</sup>

5. A list of armor and weaponry has been compiled by scholars, deriving from the *Stratēgikon* and from the *Chronicle* of Ṭabarī in Arabic.<sup>158</sup> A third list may be added, that of John of Ephesus. The list reads as follows: *gladius*, *arcus*, *sagitta*, *lorica*, *thorax*, *scutum*, *galea*, *hasta*, *contus*, and *pharetra*,<sup>159</sup> which translate sword, bow, arrow, leather cuirass, breastplate, shield, helmet, spear, lance, and quiver. John of Ephesus enumerated these weapons of the Byzantine army while he was describing the defeat that Tamkhosro, the Persian commander, inflicted on the Byzantines in 577 in Armenia. The stirrup was not mentioned.

## 2

The Arabs come into the discussion of the stirrup in connection with the problem of its diffusion in the Near East and in medieval Iran. The misdating of the *Stratēgikon* to the eighth century has vitiated the conclusions of Lynn White who argued that the Arabs "entered Iran without the stirrup for their horses . . . that the Muslims first appropriated it in A.D. 694 in Persia, whither it must recently have come from Turkestan, since it had been unknown in the Sassanian realm."<sup>160</sup> These views have been rejected by

<sup>157</sup> The improvements made possible by the stirrup are well described by White, *Medieval Technology*, 1–2. On what could happen to a warrior riding an unstirruped horse, see Evagrius, *HE*, III.xxx, who tells the story of Theodoric the Scythian, who, having vaulted into his seat, as no one helped him mount, could not hold himself firmly on his horse, an ungovernable animal. Lack of stability and anchorage finally killed him, transfixed by his own spear, which had been suspended before his tent. The Arabic terms pertaining to horsemanship reflect the predicament of riders of unstirruped horses; *amyal* (plural, *mīl*), "inclined to one side," describes such a rider who could not stay firm or straight on horseback, a blemish among the Arabs.

Bernard Bachrach contested Lynn White's views on the stirrup and shock tactics. On this and related matters, see Appendix II, below, 611–12.

<sup>158</sup> See Bivar, "Cavalry Equipment," 288, 291.

<sup>159</sup> John of Ephesus, *HE*, 230.

<sup>160</sup> White, *Medieval Technology*, 19.

A. D. H. Bivar, who cogently has argued that "since it is clear it was not from the Sassanian armies that the Arabs learned the use of the stirrups, the conclusion must be that it was from the Byzantine armies of Heraclius who, in turn, learned it through their contact with the Avars."<sup>161</sup> Although the reference to Heraclius and his armies is debatable, the conclusion is generally sound on the paths of diffusion and on the period when the Arabs learned the use of the stirrup. But Bivar makes little or no reference to the two crucial paragraphs on the saddle in his article. As the *Stratēgikon* is now correctly dated, it is necessary to attempt a review of Bivar's sound conclusions and discuss the problem in more detail. The discussion may be divided into two parts: first, the role of the Arabs in the transmission and diffusion of the stirrup in the Near East; and second, the period during which the Arabs learned the use of the stirrup, whether it was Islamic or pre-Islamic.

Bivar dated the use of the stirrup to the reign of Heraclius, and he seems to have followed E. Darkó who argued that "the final form of the tract [the *Stratēgikon*] had been written by Emperor Heraclius on the eve of his campaign against the Sassanian Empire."<sup>162</sup> But, as has been indicated in this chapter, this is not certain, and although Heraclius may have busied himself with the *Stratēgikon*, the manual was most probably written late in the sixth century. So it is better to say that the use of the stirrup became known in Byzantium ca. A.D. 600. The Arabs remain, as in Bivar's view, the recipients of the stirrup from Byzantium and its transmitters to the Persians and to North Africa after their conquest of that region.<sup>163</sup>

This leads to a more important problem related to the period during which the Arabs learned the use of the stirrup. The Ghassānid host under Mundir appears invincible in its victorious career against the Lakhmids. So the question arises as to what gave the Ghassānids the edge in strict military terms? The Ghassānid power depended on the Arab horse; so could this be attributed in part to the use of the stirrup, which gave them anchorage in the wielding of their spears and the brandishing of their swords? The same question may be raised and placed in a larger and more important historical context. Was the Arab horse at the fateful battle of the Yarmūk in 636 bestirruped, which fact added to its deadly efficiency and gave its rider the edge over his Byzantine opponent? So the question is now reduced to determining

<sup>161</sup> Bivar, "Cavalry Equipment," 290; further on the stirrup, see J. Werner, "Ein byzantinischer Steigbügel aus Caricin Grad," in *Carinian Grad*, I, ed. N. Duval and V. Popović (Belgrade-Rome, 1984), 147–55.

<sup>162</sup> Bivar, "Cavalry Equipment," 287.

<sup>163</sup> Bivar notes that in the early Persian texts the term for stirrup is not the normal Arabic term *rikāb* but *rakīb*; *ibid.*, 291, note on glossary. This is interesting since the morphological pattern after which *rakīb* was formed makes better sense than *rikāb* in reflecting the notion of stirrup, as related to mounting.

the period during which this transmission of the stirrup from Byzantium to the Arabs took place. The sources are arid on this point, and no definite conclusions can be drawn. All one can do is examine the problem and discuss whatever relevant data are available.

1. On the positive side, there is a reference to the stirrup as early as the year 630 during the battle of Ḥunayn, east of Mecca, between the Muslim army, led by the Prophet Muḥammad, and the Hawāzin tribal group. Muḥammad's mule, according to one account, was bestirrupped. This implies, of course, that the stirrup had been known to the Arabs long before 630.

The reference to the stirrup of Muḥammad's mule comes in a *ḥadīth*, an Islamic tradition, going back to the uncle of the Prophet, al-ʿAbbās, and related by the Traditionalist Muslim. Islamic *ḥadīths* are haunted by the problem of authenticity, and in this case it may be said that it was concocted in order to present the Prophet in a favorable light at the battle of Ḥunayn. But if the *ḥadīth* turns out to be spurious, the reference to the *rikāb* need not be. In any case, this is possibly the earliest reference to a stirrup in the Arabic sources.<sup>164</sup>

2. Much more important are the two sayings attributed to the Caliph Omar (636–646) in which he recommends to the early Muslim warriors, among other things, that they should mount their horses by jumping on them without using the stirrups,<sup>165</sup> *rukub* (plural of *rikāb*). The caliph was recommending the more difficult method of mounting a horse without the help of stirrups as a reflection of better horsemanship and as a warning that Muslims may not always have the benefit of the stirrup and so they must be able to

<sup>164</sup> For later ones in the 7th century, see White, *Medieval Technology*, 18–19. The *ḥadīth* is quoted by S. al-Bishrī in his commentary on A. Shawqī's *Nahj al-Burda* (Cairo, no date), 73.

The term *rikāb* is unfortunately also used to denote "camel" (in the plural), and it appears in pre-Islamic poetry. It would be pleasant to think that ʿAntara, the famous pre-Islamic knight, was speaking of a stirrup when he used the term *rikāb*, but it is practically certain he meant camels; see W. Ahlwardt, *The Divans of the Six Ancient Arabic Poets* (repr. Osnabrück, 1972), p. 48, verse 79, where the editor has substituted *jimāl* (camels) for *rikāb*, which appears in the *apparatus criticus*, p. 25.

Reference to *rikāb*, stirrup, at the battle of Ḥunayn, appears in other Arabic sources such as Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*. But while the reference to *rikāb* as stirrup cannot be doubted in the *ḥadīth*, related by the Traditionalist Muslim, it can be in Ṭabarī, where there is reference to two other appurtenances of the harness of the Prophet's mount, namely, the *ḥakamat* and the *ṭhafar*, related to the bridle and the stirrup respectively. *Rikāb* comes in the phrase describing the coming of the Prophet, *fi rikābibi*, in his *rikāb*, and the question arises whether *rikāb* here means camels or stirrup since there is reference to camels in the account of the battle. The more natural meaning in this context, however, is stirrup, the phrase meaning he came mounted, with his foot in the stirrup, especially as it contrasts with the fact that the Prophet then descended from his mule, *nazala*; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. M. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1962), III, 75–76. For the battle of Ḥunayn, see *El*<sup>2</sup>, s.v.

<sup>165</sup> For the two sayings, see the chapter on war, *ḥarb*, in Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn al-Akḥbār* (Cairo, 1963), I, 132–33.



mount their horses by jumping on them.<sup>166</sup> The two sayings are clear in their explicit reference to stirrups and are not subject to the charge of spuriousness that the *ḥadīth* on the Prophet Muḥammad at the battle of Ḥunayn is.

3. The Ghassānid allies of Byzantium were the recipients of some splendid panegyrics, composed for them by some of the foremost poets of pre-Islamic times:<sup>167</sup> one of them, Nābigha, especially mentions the arms of the Ghassānids and their horses, but there is not a single reference to the stirrup.<sup>168</sup> This is not decisive for the following reasons: (a) the poet usually concentrates on the virtues of the rider rather than the mount; (b) when he describes the horse, he naturally pays attention to its limbs, spirit, strength, beauty, and mettle-someness; (c) the stirrup may thus have been felt to be unworthy of mention since it belonged neither to the horse nor the rider but to the harness; (d) finally, as already mentioned, the stirrup provided an easy way for mounting the horse, unworthy of the seasoned horseman, who was expected to jump upon his horse and sit on its saddle firmly without the help of the stirrup.

4. In the *Ecclesiastical History*, John of Ephesus describes the gifts that Emperor Tiberius gave the Ghassānid king Mundir when he came to Constantinople in 580 and was crowned with the diadem. In addition, the emperor gave him some trappings for his horses: gold saddles and bridles. But there is no mention of stirrups.<sup>169</sup> This omission, too, is not decisive since the saddle and bridle are more impressive as gifts than the stirrup. Possibly even the gift of the stirrup may have been inappropriate for the veteran horseman who might have considered it a reflection on his skill. Yet the passage in John of Ephesus is noteworthy. It could argue that the stirrup was not known to Byzantium as early as 580 when Mundir visited Tiberius. This could give some support to Bivar's view that the Arabs learned the use of the stirrup in the reign of Heraclius.

Although precision and absolute certainty about matters of detail are impossible, the following conclusion may be drawn with some degree of probability.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. what J. C. Coulston says on modern cavalry, that they "are trained to ride without stirrups, partly to simulate their loss in battle"; see his "Roman, Parthian and Sasanid Tactical Developments," in *The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East*, ed. P. Freeman and D. Kennedy, BAR International Series 297 (1) (1986), 61. Cf. also what al-Hajjaj, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, said, to the effect that Muslims should teach their children swimming even before writing since they could find those who would write for them but not those who could swim for them.

<sup>167</sup> On the poets of the Ghassānids, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>168</sup> Nor to bows and arrows, which may not have been used extensively by the Ghassānids, for whom the sword and the spear were the two principal weapons. But since the last two were the ones that reflected on the bravery of the Ghassānid mounted warrior, the bow and arrow received no mention in poems that were panegyrics.

<sup>169</sup> For this see above, 399–402.



1. Byzantium certainly learned the use of the stirrup slightly before or after A.D. 600, following its encounters with the Avars along the Danube and in the Balkans.

2. The Arab group that was most likely to have adopted the use of the stirrup from Byzantium is naturally its allies (*symmachoi*), the Ghassānids.

3. It seems impossible to believe that the Ghassānids, who were such keen horsemen and were so closely associated with the army of the Orient, would not have adopted the stirrup. As horsemen, they knew a good thing when they saw it. This is consonant with their quick assimilation of the Byzantine military techniques since the time of Jabala, the grandfather of Muḍir, who was described by Zacharia as one who fought in the Roman manner.

4. The Arab group that transmitted the stirrup to its countrymen, the Arabs, must then have been the Ghassānid *foederati*. Their campaigns in the Arabian Peninsula carried them far and wide into Ḥijāz in this very period, the last quarter century before the beginning of the Persian war, ca. 610. The Arabs of Ḥijāz might then have learned the use of the stirrup from the Ghassānid contingent fighting there.

5. If the report on the Prophet Muḥammad's stirrup in 630 turns out to be authentic, then the Arabs of Ḥijāz must have known its use in this quarter century before 610. If so, it is possible that the Arab horse that contributed to the victory of Yarmūk was indeed equipped with the stirrup as part of its harness.

#### D

The Ghassānids fought in the Byzantine army for at least a hundred years, where they formed a regular contingent in the army of the Orient. The climax of their military participation in the wars of Byzantium was the second half of the sixth century, especially during the reign of Muḍir when, in the decade or so of his reign that spanned those of Justin and Tiberius, the Ghassānid army appeared invincible, scoring victories over the enemy. There is no doubt that this was partly due to their assimilation of advanced Byzantine military techniques. In his eulogy of Jabala, Muḍir's grandfather, Zacharia speaks of his having learned to fight in the Roman manner, as early as 528. During the fifty years that elapsed from that time to the coronation of Muḍir in 580, the Ghassānids must have perfected whatever they had assimilated from the Byzantine military establishment through regular participation in the campaigns of the army of Oriens. Although there is little or no explicit reference in the sources to what exactly they adopted, one may infer much from the *Stratēgikon*. This is the most famous Byzantine military manual of the sixth century, when the Ghassānids flourished as *foederati*. Moreover, it deals mainly with cavalry, which is what the Ghassānid contingent was. Mun-

dir, the arbitrator of theological disputes and a visitor of the emperor in Constantinople, must have been a highly literate man who could have read some of these manuals—if not the *Stratēgikon*, for chronological reasons, some other manual on which the writer of the *Stratēgikon* openly depended. Even if Munḍir did not actually read any military manuals, he would have assimilated all the advanced Byzantine military methods on the battlefield, apparently with the exception of one. The *Stratēgikon* recommends that the general should direct the battle and not take an active part in fighting.<sup>170</sup> Munḍir disregarded this advice, as he represented the type of dashing general who personally leads in battle and charges at the head of his troops. This of course was the Arab style of warfare.

Although what the Ghassānids assimilated is not documented, the following may be mentioned as likely: (1) fighting not in lines (*ṣufūf*; plural of *ṣaff*, line) but in units or divisions, as is clearly indicated in Book II, which deals with cavalry battle formation;<sup>171</sup> (2) the use of spies and scouts;<sup>172</sup> (3) the employment of flags;<sup>173</sup> (4) the term “chiliarch” in the *Stratēgikon*, which may have become the Arabic *jarrār*, the leader of a thousand, a term attested not for the Ghassānids but for pastoralists of Arabia.<sup>174</sup> As for weaponry, this is documented in Arabic poetry for the Ghassānid warriors and for the harness of their horses.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>170</sup> *Stratēgikon*, 69; the recommendation for the general reads as follows: “He should not himself join in the actual fighting; this is not the role of the general but the soldier.”

<sup>171</sup> The *Stratēgikon* is a cavalry manual, as the first eleven books testify. When the author later added Book XII on the infantry, he says, in referring to the first eleven books: “. . . as we mentioned in the treatise on the cavalry”; Dennis, *Stratēgikon*, xvii. It is not easy to guess what the Ghassānids adopted from it or from its application during the battles that the Byzantines waged in Oriens and in which the Ghassānids participated. But Book II, which dealt with the cavalry battle formation, is especially relevant in this connection. So are pp. 16–17 of Book I, which explain the various units or divisions into which the Byzantine army was divided; such terms as *tagma*, *moira*, *chiliarchy* are important for examining the two crucial terms in Arabic, *katiba* and *kurdūs*, on which, see BASIC II.

<sup>172</sup> *Stratēgikon*, passim; see index. For spies and scouts in the army of Munḍir during his Lakhmid campaigns, see above, 422, 424, 427.

<sup>173</sup> For flags see *ibid.*, 14, 32, 65. Flags were not unknown in the military annals of pre-Islamic Arabia. But the special attention accorded them in the *Stratēgikon* may have inspired the Ghassānids to adopt Byzantine refinements. The Arab federate army, it must be remembered, was pluralistic, in spite of the fact that the Ghassānid element dominated it. So other tribal groups were represented, such as the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, and they must have had their own flags in the Arab contingent. For Byzantine flags, see G. T. Dennis, “Byzantine Battle Flags,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 8 (1981), 51–60; the most detailed description of Arab flags with their mottos comes in an Arabic historical work on the battle of Šiffin fought in 657 between Caliph ‘Ali and the Umayyad governor of Syria, Mu‘āwiya, for which, see M. Hinds, “The Banners and Battle Cries of the Arabs at Šiffin (657 AD),” *al-Abḥāth* (American University of Beirut), 24 (1971), 3–42. Ghassān is represented at the battle; for its banner, see *ibid.*, fig. M9 A, p. 42.

<sup>174</sup> For the chiliarch, see *Stratēgikon*, 16; on the *jarrār*, see BAFIC, 263, 483, 506, 508.

<sup>175</sup> See BASIC II.

Especially important and attractive is what might be termed the liturgy of war in the *Stratēgikon*, reflected in such practices as the battle cry, *Nobiscum Deus*, and the recitation of the *Kyrie eleison* by priests, generals, and officers before the battle began, as well as the ceremony of the flag.<sup>176</sup> The Ghassānids would have participated in this liturgy, or at least viewed it, as part of the army of Oriens. They were zealous Christians and fought their battles as such. It is therefore certain that they would have adopted all these practices, and employed the liturgy of war before their battle as when they fought against the Lakhmids alone without the help of the army of the Orient.<sup>177</sup>

Whatever advanced military techniques the Arabs of the Peninsula might have had must have been mediated by the Ghassānids. The latter were Byzantium's Arab allies for a century or more before the rise of Islam, and hence they were the liaison group between Byzantium and the Peninsula to whom must be attributed the transmission of Byzantine military science. This is especially important for the Arabs of Ḥijāz, the cradle of Islam where, in the reigns of Maurice and Phocas, Ghassānid power seems to have been concentrated again in the south of Oriens, in the Provincia Arabia, whence the Ghassānids conducted campaigns in Ḥijāz, far and wide.<sup>178</sup> When it is remembered that Ḥijāz, more than Arabia in its entirety, was the cradle of Islam, the relevance of the Ghassānid military presence there to what happened in 636 along the banks of the Yarmūk becomes clear.<sup>179</sup>

## E

It remains to interpret the silence of the *Stratēgikon* on the Arabs, and it is truly significant. This is a manual that devotes a long chapter to discussing the various peoples against whom Byzantium warred: Persians, Scythians (Avars and Turks), Franks, Lombards, Slavs, and Antes. And yet the Arabs are missing, the people that occupied almost the entire Pars Orientalis in the third century under Zenobia, the queen of Arab Palmyra, and who, in the Byzantine period, lived in a Peninsula that had a long frontier with the empire, from Ayla on the Red Sea to Circesium on the Euphrates.

There can be no doubt that the answer to this question has to be sought in the success of the phylarchal system devised by the Christian Roman Empire for dealing with the Arab problem—attempting to contain the Arabs of

<sup>176</sup> See *Stratēgikon*, 33, 65.

<sup>177</sup> The Ghassānid flags presumably had the cross represented on them, as had been the practice of having it on the *labarum* since the days of Constantine. Fragments of poems written on the Ghassānids that have survived suggest this; a verse by Nābigha mentions the cross on a Ghassānid structure; the Christian Arab tribe of Taghlib employed the cross as an emblem in its battles. On all this, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>178</sup> On this see *BASIC II*.

<sup>179</sup> This will be discussed in the third part of this trilogy.

the Peninsula not through the employment of legions and regular Roman troops but mainly through the use of Arabs to fight the Peninsular Arabs with whose methods of warfare they were familiar. The system was perfected by Justinian in 530 when he was able to unite the pluralistic federate presence under one command, that of the Ghassānid Arethas, who became king and supreme phylarch. For forty years the system prospered and reached its climax under Mundir. The Ghassānid *foederati* not only controlled the Arabian desert but also proved their superiority over the Lakhmids. When the writer of the *Stratēgikon* composed his manual sometime toward the end of the sixth century, he must have felt it perfectly superfluous to include the Arabs in the chapter on the *ethnika*, not even to the point of mentioning them incidentally. For him, the Arabs had been controlled for the last three centuries by the system of *phylarchoi* and *foederati*, especially in the second half of the sixth century with the rise of the invincible Ghassānid contingent. Thus the silence of the *Stratēgikon* is eloquent testimony to the success of Justinian's pro-Ghassānid policy, which culminated in the creation of the Arab *Basileia* in 529.<sup>180</sup>

A few decades after the *Stratēgikon* was written, the unexpected happened: the very people who had been left out of the *ethnika* of the manual won the annihilating and, to the Byzantines, incomprehensible victory of the Yarmūk in 636. The secret of the Arab victory, related to the rise of Islam, is beyond the scope of this volume and is a very complex historical problem. Only what is directly relevant to the theme of the present volume will be touched upon here. As has been indicated, the Ghassānid phylarchate—the shield that protected Byzantium against Arabia—was considerably weakened by Maurice,<sup>181</sup> and the seeds of the catastrophes of the Persian and Arab wars of Heraclius' reign were sown in the disastrous reign of Maurice.<sup>182</sup> Both the

<sup>180</sup> Thus the Byzantine sources, which seem incomprehensibly silent on the Arabs in the 6th century, begin to cohere—exemplified by the enigmatic gap in the *Buildings* of Procopius and the silence of the *Stratēgikon* on the Arabs. Justinian entrusted the Ghassānids with the defense of the Arabian *limes* from the Euphrates to the Red Sea ca. 530 when he created their leader, Arethas, an extraordinary supreme phylarch. Fifty years or so after that date, the Ghassānids had kept such good watch over the *limes* entrusted to them that the author of the *Stratēgikon* found it superfluous even to mention the Peninsular Arabs as a threat.

<sup>181</sup> The implication of the consequences of Maurice's dissolution of the centralized Ghassānid phylarchate passed unnoticed by the Byzantine military establishment. So the writer of the *Stratēgikon* did not find it necessary to address the problem of an Arabian *limes* exposed to possible attackers from the Arabian Peninsula, now that the powerful protective shield of the Ghassānids had been weakened. Fifty years of security along that *limes* had lulled them into the illusion that the Peninsula had become harmless. Perhaps it is extravagant to expect the Byzantine observer of the Arabian scene to evaluate truly the consequences of Maurice's action at the time, since the series of events that led to the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests were truly extraordinary.

<sup>182</sup> On this see below, 605–10.

rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests constituted for Byzantium a series of surprises that completely confounded the empire. When Heraclius was finally able to contain the Persian offensive and win the war, he had at his disposal some military manuals that helped him wage his campaigns, such as the *Stratēgikon* with its chapter on the *ethnika* and possibly the συγγράμματα of Constantine and Julian. But when, after winning the war against the Persians,<sup>183</sup> he fought the Arabs, he had absolutely nothing to guide him on how to operate against the new foe. This was especially disastrous for a Byzantine general and emperor used to consulting military manuals on the particular barbarian adversary he was to fight.<sup>184</sup> The *Stratēgikon* was at his disposal, but it had absolutely nothing on the Arabs.<sup>185</sup>

## F

While the *Stratēgikon* must be a sixth-century composition, another military treatise, supposed to be a product of the same century, must be post-dated.<sup>186</sup> A paragraph in this treatise, *Peri Stratēgias*, pertains to the Arabs:

The present-day Romans, Arabs, and many other peoples make use of ambushes, although, in my opinion, not to great advantage. They usually conceal some detachment, while the rest of the army moves out in the open to lead the enemy on. Is there a person with any intelligence who, on seeing a few men boldly advancing against a large number, will not suspect an ambush? For this reason, they will be cautious in pursuing them and will not press the pursuit far.<sup>187</sup>

This paragraph attracted the attention of the present writer in 1988 when he reached the conclusion that the section of the treatise in which it occurs must belong to the middle Byzantine period. In support of this contention, the following arguments were given:<sup>188</sup>

a. The term *Arabes* itself is somewhat incongruous in an early Byzantine

<sup>183</sup> See W. Kaegi, "Constantine's and Julian's Strategies of Strategic Surprise against the Persians," *Athenaeum* 59 (1981), 209–13.

<sup>184</sup> See W. Kaegi, "Two Notes on Heraclius," *REB* 37 (1979), 224–27.

<sup>185</sup> Heraclius could derive little or no comfort from the short section in the *Stratēgikon* titled "Waging War against an Unfamiliar People"; see *Stratēgikon*, 67. Furthermore, he thematized Oriens to meet the Persian threat to that diocese after his victory at Nineveh and the recovery of Oriens. So he was completely unaware of the imminent storm that was brewing in Arabia and that was to break loose shortly after, and was completely unprepared for it.

<sup>186</sup> See Περί Στρατηγίας in *Three Byzantine Military Treatises*, ed. and trans. G. T. Dennis, CFHB 25 (Washington, D.C., 1985), 10–136.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 119 and 121 note 1.

<sup>188</sup> This paragraph on the Arabs was the subject of a correspondence between Jonathan Shepard and the present writer in 1988; for a relevant note on the date of this treatise, see D. Lee and J. Shepard, "A Double Life: Placing the *Peri Presbeon*," *Byzantinoslavica* 52 (1991), 39, the asterisked note.

text. The usual word for the Arabs in this early period is *Saraceni*. *Arabes* is applied in this period only to certain categories of Arabs.<sup>189</sup>

b. That the Arabs are mentioned at all in a military treatise pertaining to the sixth century is another reason for rejecting a sixth-century date for this passage in *Peri Stratēgias*. The *Stratēgikon* is completely silent on the Arabs, despite the fact that it discusses with some detail all the other enemies of the empire and how to deal with them. In this early Byzantine period, Byzantium solved the Arab problem so well through the system of *phylarchoi* and *foederati* that it was no longer worth mentioning the Arabs.

c. Finally, it is striking that the Arabs are mentioned on the same level as the Romans. This cannot be a reference to the Arab pastoralists of the Peninsula in the early Byzantine period since these, as explained in the preceding paragraph, ceased to have a place in the military thinking of Byzantium. The reference can only have been to the Muslim Arabs of the period of the Caliphate. Allied to this is that the *Arabes* are singled out by name from all the other enemies, such as the Slavs, which suggests even more that they are the Arabs of the world of Islam. This answers to the historical fact that they and the Byzantines were the two main contestants for supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East in the middle Byzantine period.

Barry Baldwin has also argued for a later date for *Peri Stratēgias* and discussed various points, including the paragraph on the Arabs.<sup>190</sup> The detailed argument given above concerning this paragraph should give considerable support to his conclusions. While the other points he mentions admit of various interpretations, this one on the Arabs admits of only one, and thus it is decisive for dating the whole treatise.

### VIII. JOHN OF EPHESUS ON THE GHASSĀNIDS: AN EVALUATION

John of Ephesus is the major Syriac historian of the sixth century, and yet no serious work on his *Ecclesiastical History*<sup>191</sup> has appeared for almost a century since A. Dyakonov<sup>192</sup> wrote in 1908. Recent Syriac scholars seem to have

<sup>189</sup> As to the use of *Arabes* in Procopius, *History*, I.xix.19, this was only natural since he was talking about the Nabataean Arabs, always referred to as such in the sources; besides, they belonged to the Roman period and before the term *Saraceni* appeared in Byzantine literature. Cf. the usage of Procopius when he speaks of contemporary Arabs in the 6th century, always *Saraceni* (I.xix.10, 14, 16, and I.xx.9). This is also the term used in the entire proto-Byzantine period from the 4th to the 6th and 7th centuries starting with Ammianus. Further on the terms *Saraceni* and *Arabes*, see the present writer in *RA*, 123–41.

<sup>190</sup> See B. Baldwin, "On the Date of the Anonymous ΠΕΡΙ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΙΚΗΣ," *BZ* 81 (1988), 290–93.

<sup>191</sup> Hereafter *HE*.

<sup>192</sup> See A. Dyakonov, *Ioann Efesskiy* (St. Petersburg, 1908). This basic work on John of Ephesus has been noticed by E. W. Brooks, who depended mostly on him in writing the introduction to his translation of the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, in *PO* 17, pp. iii–vi.



ignored him. Although his *HE* has been included in the CSCO, both his Syriac version and a Latin version, yet no edition of the *HE* has appeared with a commentary to supersede the utterly outdated one of R. Payne Smith.<sup>193</sup> The most recent excellent study of a Syriac historian was devoted to the inferior Dionysius of Tell-Maḥre,<sup>194</sup> and so students of the *HE* must still depend on a commentary that appeared a century and a half ago and a study that appeared in 1908.

His other extant work, *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, has fared better. A Western medievalist, Peter Brown, exhumed the *Lives* from its obscurity and advertised its importance to the historian of the sixth century. Most recently, Susan Ashbrook Harvey has perpetuated interest in the *Lives* by writing *Asceticism and Society in Crisis*, a book based on the *Lives*.<sup>195</sup>

But the *HE* is at least as important as the *Lives*, and to some students of the sixth century, even more important. It is time that serious attention is paid to it, commensurate with its worth, especially as some recent work on this century has not done justice to John of Ephesus; even his credibility has been impugned and questioned.<sup>196</sup> This section on John of Ephesus does not pretend to be an evaluation of the *HE* in its entirety but only of a small portion of it, that on the Ghassānids. However, small as it is quantitatively, it is important in that it deals with this Arab group during the post-Justinianic period, especially the reign of Maurice—crucial for understanding the course of events that led to the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquest. John of Ephesus is not only a primary source for all this, but he is also our only source. Although his work is entitled *Ecclesiastical History*, John devotes as much attention to secular as to ecclesiastical matters, especially important in the case of the Ghassānids, who were both soldiers and staunch Monophysites. Hence he emerges as the foremost historian of their ecclesiastical as well as of their secular history in the sixth century.

#### A

Before an evaluation of John as the historian of the Ghassānids in the sixth century is attempted, a few observations of a general nature on his credibility as a historian are necessary as a background within which his account of

<sup>193</sup> See *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John, Bishop of Ephesus*, trans. R. Payne Smith (Oxford, 1860).

<sup>194</sup> W. Witakowski, *The Syriac Chronicle of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell-Maḥre: A Study in the History of Historiography*, Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 9 (Uppsala, 1987).

<sup>195</sup> See Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley, 1990). For an appreciation of Peter Brown's work and for his relevant bibliography, see *ibid.*, 207.

<sup>196</sup> See Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 257–58, where he impugns his veracity.

the Ghassānids may be placed.<sup>197</sup> It is necessary to do this because, although his worth and credibility have been recognized, his account of the Ghassānids has aroused strong feelings among historians. The relevant features of his background pertaining to his qualifications for writing the history of the period and his credibility may be summarized as follows.

a. John knew practically the whole of the *Pars Orientalis*. He traveled extensively in Anatolia, Oriens, and Egypt, where he acquainted himself with the region whose history he wrote.

b. From 540 until his death in the late 580s, Constantinople was his headquarters. His long residence in the capital thus complemented his knowledge of the provinces.

c. In Constantinople he was close to the emperor. Especially harmonious were his relations with Justinian who, married to a Monophysite empress, was well disposed toward him and entrusted him with the all-important task of converting to Christianity what remained of pagan pockets in Anatolia. This implies that John was considered exceptionally trustworthy, especially as this expression of trust came from a Chalcedonian emperor.

d. After the death of Justinian, John remained close to his successors—Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice. This insured that the author of the *HE* had access to the data he recorded in his *History*, and this must have ranged from acquaintance with imperial policy at the top, to archives that were accessible to him, and to visitors to the capital, especially Monophysite dignitaries.

e. As a historian of the Monophysite movement in the sixth century, he could not have been more favorably placed. During some twenty-five years and until 566, he was close to the Monophysite patriarch of Alexandria, Theodosius, who resided in Constantinople. Thus through him he would have been in an excellent position to remain well informed about the fortunes of his confession in Oriens and Egypt. After the death of Theodosius in 566, he became the virtual head of the Monophysite community in Constantinople, and he continued to be such for some twenty years until his death.

An author such as this was thus in a privileged position to give a first-hand account of the events that took place during his lifetime. That he was not a literary historian is an added attraction since such historians are sometimes open to the charge that their literary art could be detrimental to their veracity and accuracy. In addition, John was a devout Christian, who started his religious life in the best tradition of Christianity in the Orient, as an ascetic, and began his monastic career at the monastery in Amida. Some two

<sup>197</sup> For John of Ephesus, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 181–82. Brooks' introduction to his translation of the *Lives of the Eastern Saints* in PO 17 is still valuable; but for the most recent short account of his life and writings, see Harvey, *Asceticism* 28–32.

decades later, he was consecrated bishop of Ephesus by Jacob Baradaeus himself, although Ephesus remained a titular bishopric for him. An author of such qualifications for writing an ecclesiastical history does instill confidence. A measure of his care and conscientiousness in reporting is reflected in some of his statements where he reminds the reader that he was unable to ascertain the exact truth about some event or transaction, and he does this on more than one occasion.<sup>198</sup> Some reservation concerning such matters in the *HE* as chronology are easily explicable by the difficult circumstances under which he composed and which he himself explains, namely, that he wrote in fragments and at various times, when his people were suffering Chalcedonian persecution, including himself who went through the hardships of imprisonment.

The more fundamental charge has been his Monophysitism and that he wrote his history from that slant. That he was a Monophysite, and a leading one at that, cannot be denied, but that this should affect his credibility has to be rejected. His sympathies do not necessarily result in prejudice or lack of objectivity. It sometimes is an advantage as it enables the author to enter into his theme with more understanding. Furthermore, as E. W. Brooks noted in his introduction, John is least interested in theology and rarely enters into theological accounts, and the only official document he cites is the Henotikon.<sup>199</sup> John was a churchman interested in the welfare of the Christian church and its unity rather than in theological disputes. This is clear in his account of the efforts of the Ghassānid Mundir to unite the various Monophysite factions in Constantinople as a step toward a reconciliation with the Chalcedonians. Furthermore, he spent some twenty years living in the reign of Justinian, who with Theodora was genuinely interested in the unification of the church, and so he remained throughout the reigns of Justinian's successors. He might have been enthusiastic in behalf of Monophysitism on certain occasions, and he may have been inclined to record unflattering statements on some Chalcedonian figures, such as the patriarchs of Antioch, Ephraim and Gregory,<sup>200</sup> but this should not be exaggerated to the point of serving as a ground for questioning his objectivity and credibility. What has been recently said of his credibility in the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, that his hagiography does not affect his

<sup>198</sup> Examples of his scrupulous care in ascertaining facts are the following: *HE*, Latin version: p. 51, lines 5–7; p. 100, lines 18–19; the whole of Book IV, chap. 46, pp. 172–74, especially the opening and the concluding sentences; p. 210, lines 10–14.

<sup>199</sup> See Brooks, PO 17, p. xiii.

<sup>200</sup> See *HE*, Book III, chap 29. Rumors about Gregory's behavior were circulating, but John did not invent them. He simply recorded them, as Evagrius himself, a protégé of Gregory, did. As Gregory was the archenemy of the Monophysites in Oriens, John was naturally disposed to believe these rumors which reached such intensity that he had to appear in person before the emperor to have them cleared. So John recorded them, possibly inclined to believe they were true. But he was no scandalmonger.

historicity,<sup>201</sup> can be said with equal truth about his Monophysitism and how it did not affect his historiography in the *Ecclesiastical History*. There are occasions when the historian has to be careful in using him, but they are very few and can easily be guarded against.

## B

The coverage of Ghassānid history in the *HE* was extensive, and this may be measured briefly by the following items in its extant portions.

1. Of the history of Arethas, son of Jabala, of the reign of Justinian, two fragments have survived, preserved in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian.<sup>202</sup> Arethas' encounter with Ephraim, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Antioch, and the account of the final battle with Munḍir, the Lakhmid king, whom he defeated in 554. Both are precious accounts which flood with light the history of the reign of Arethas and reveal the two dimensions of his activity as a zealous Monophysite and a redoubtable warrior.

2. More important is John's coverage of Munḍir, Arethas' son, during the reigns of three successive emperors: Justin II, Tiberius, and Maurice. This is more valuable than his coverage of the father, since it was Munḍir's relations with Maurice that have contributed their generous share to the tragic course that events took.<sup>203</sup> It is all the more important as the Greek sources are silent on most of the reign of Munḍir, and when they are not, they distort the picture of the Ghassānid king and portray him as one who betrayed Maurice.

3. Finally, John went out of his way to write the history of the Ghassānid dynasty—its rise, decline, and fall—toward the end of his *History*.<sup>204</sup> Only the title remains in the table of contents, but the chapter itself is lost, a great disaster for the historian of Arab-Byzantine relations. That an author writing an ecclesiastical history should go out of his way to write a history of a dynasty of warriors is noteworthy. It can only reflect the fact that he thought them significant enough in the history of the period to be treated in a separate monograph, especially as he covered them in the context of Byzantine history in the body of the *HE*. He could not have been unduly prejudiced in their favor since as a native of Amida, not Arabia, he was not related to them.

<sup>201</sup> Harvey, *Asceticism*, xiii.

<sup>202</sup> Michael must have had before him at Dayr al-Za'farān in Mardīn the full and complete text of the *HE* when he wrote his *Chronicle*. So one can assume that at least as late as the 12th century, the complete text of the *HE* was still extant.

<sup>203</sup> Without the evidence from John, many big questions concerning the extraordinary course that events took would have remained unanswered. And this enhances the value of John, an aspect of his work still unknown and unappreciated, but which will be discussed in detail in the third part of this trilogy.

<sup>204</sup> See *HE*, Book VI, chap. 41, where he writes about the rise and subsequent fall of the principality of the Roman Arabs. In the Latin version, the title of the chapter reads, "Quomodo principatus Ṭayâyê Romanorum elatus sit et postea depressus"; *HE*, p. 209, lines 227–28.

However, he was a Monophysite, as they were, and this must have inspired him to remember them in this detailed and separate manner, recording most probably their prowess as warriors as much as their contribution to the welfare of Monophysitism.<sup>205</sup>

If John was the primary source for the history of the Ghassānids, what were his sources, and how did he collect his material for his account of the Ghassānids?

Autopsy: John lived for some fifty years in Constantinople, and to that city traveled at least three of the Ghassānid kings and phylarchs—Arethas, Munḍir, and Nu'mān. He may not have met Arethas around 540, but most probably he did in 563 when the latter made his journey to Constantinople to arrange for the succession of Munḍir. Arethas certainly met Theodosius, the Monophysite patriarch, then,<sup>206</sup> and by 563 John had been bishop of Ephesus for some six years. As a prominent Monophysite in the capital, John would have met Arethas, unless he was away on one of his missions to convert pagans in Anatolia. As to Munḍir, he made two trips to Constantinople before his arrest, and while he was a prisoner in the capital he must have had plenty of time to meet with the head of the Monophysite community there. John certainly attended the conference convened by Munḍir in Constantinople on 2 March 580, as he himself says.<sup>207</sup> The same applies to Nu'mān, who languished in the capital for years; John most probably saw him and conversed with him on the history of the dynasty as he had done with his father and grandfather.

Archives: Such data as the victory of Arethas over the Lakhmid Munḍir in 554 and his son's victory over the Lakhmid Kābūs in 570 must have derived from archives. The two Ghassānids sent their victory reports to Antioch, whence they were conveyed to Constantinople, where they rested in the archives. But John, who was a *persona grata* in court circles, must have had access to these archives. The specificity that informs his account of events such as the battles that were fought so far from the capital in which he lived betrays archival provenance.<sup>208</sup>

Thus from both autopsy and archives, John collected his material on the Ghassānids. Certain episodes that he relates may have derived from both

<sup>205</sup> In his *Life of James*, he recorded some precious material on their ecclesiastical history when he wrote on their bishop Theodore; see *BASIC* I.2, 761–68.

<sup>206</sup> On the meeting of Arethas with Theodosius, see *ibid.*, 784–87.

<sup>207</sup> See *HE*, Book IV, chap. 40, p. 165, lines 10–11.

<sup>208</sup> On the specificity of detail which suggests access to a document, see above, the account of Arethas' final victory over his Lakhmid adversary in 554. In his account of Munḍir's quarrel with Maurice, he speaks of the dispatch of angry accusations to Emperor Tiberius by both of them. As John was aware of their contents, this suggests he had access to them; see *HE*, Book VI, chap. 16, p. 237, lines 19–20.

sources, such as the conference at Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis) between Mundir and Justinianus, the *magister militum per Orientem*, in the mid 570s. Justinianus must have sent an account of the meeting, so ardently desired by the central government, and this rested in Constantinople. John says in his account that so much was said between the two that it was difficult to reproduce it, and this suggests that he had documents at his disposal that told the story.<sup>209</sup> Later, when Mundir languished in the capital, he might also have informed John on what had taken place. And from the Ghassānid kings themselves, he could have derived his information for the special chapter he wrote on them which is not extant.

Thus John's account of the Ghassānids derives from the most primary of all sources, and he could not but have handled this material with care. His Monophysite confession may have enhanced his admiration and enthusiasm for the Ghassānids, but he could not have tampered with the essential facts of Ghassānid history, a charge that may be made rather against the Greek authors of the reigns of Justinian's successors. So, in addition to being the sole historian of the extraordinary events that took place during the reign of Mundir,<sup>210</sup> John is a source that enables the student of Byzantine historiography in the sixth century to return to the Greek authors—Menander, Evagrius, John of Epiphania, and Theophylact—and reach a more accurate assessment of their objectivity in reporting on the reigns of the post-Justinianic emperors,<sup>211</sup> in much the same way that Malalas has functioned as a check on Procopius when the latter vented his antipathies against the same dynasty.<sup>212</sup>

### C

It remains to discuss the image of John of Ephesus in the mirror of modern historiography and how he has fared with those who have written on the sixth century, especially the controversial reign of Maurice. Although appreciated by the two giants in the fields of Orientalism and Byzantine studies earlier in this century, Nöldeke and Stein, he has not done well with their successors in the second half of this century.

Paul Goubert was the first scholar to treat at great length the reign of Maurice and with it the Ghassānids, especially the reign of Mundir, and his judgment on Mundir and his historian, John, was unfavorable. More recent scholarship on the subject has generally followed the lead given by Goubert on

<sup>209</sup> On this see above, 461–63.

<sup>210</sup> Such as the five victories of Mundir over the Lakhmids; the plot to capture him in the early 570s; the meeting with Justinianus at the shrine of St. Sergius; and his second coronation in 580. All this would have remained unknown to modern historians since the Greek sources are utterly silent on them.

<sup>211</sup> On those four Greek historians, see above, 331–37, 367–69, and below, 592–97.

<sup>212</sup> See above, 168–71.



John of Ephesus,<sup>213</sup> and so it is necessary to examine in detail the views of the scholar who set this trend in the early 1950s. This is a complex problem with many dimensions, but before these are explored, it is necessary to demonstrate the extent to which Goubert went in his antipathies toward Muḏīr and the Ghassānids and in the process committed a number of major errors, some of which have already been mentioned above in discussing the *prodosia* charge.

1. In the opening section of his chapter on the Ghassānids,<sup>214</sup> he practically condemns them in every paragraph, picturing them as scheming Monophysites acting against the welfare of Chalcedonian Byzantium.

2. At the end of that chapter he cites from a previous author, hostile to the Ghassānids, a long quotation that condemns not only the Ghassānids of Muḏīr but those of his father, Arethas, before him.<sup>215</sup>

3. Goubert's chapter on the Ghassānids is followed by another on the attestations of Saracens in the work of John Moschus.<sup>216</sup> He introduces the chapter with a paragraph that puts the Ghassānids in an unfavorable light and with them the image of the Saracens in Palestine.

4. Finally, in a chapter on the Provincia Arabia and building activity there, he claims that this continued in spite of the Ghassānid revolt under Nuḥmān.<sup>217</sup> His statement is irrelevant since the date of these buildings is assigned to the last decade of the century, long after the revolt came to an end in the early 580s, and he was unaware that Byzantium restored the Ghassānid dynasty in the late 580s.

The recital of this extraordinary, untrue account of the Ghassānids has been necessary to demonstrate Goubert's antipathy to John, who was the historian of the Ghassānids, especially Muḏīr's reign, and whose account of the reign Goubert rejected. This attitude is reflected not only inferentially from his rejection of Muḏīr, but also in explicit statements. For Goubert, John is not objective since his sympathies are with the Ghassānids, and they are suspect, and so is John—together with Michael the Syrian—because they are Monophysites.<sup>218</sup> He goes to the length of contradicting John concerning his assertion that some of the Ghassānids joined the Persians after the dissolution of the phylarchate and says this is not true but that only the Lakhmids moved in the orbit of Byzantium,<sup>219</sup> a plainly erroneous statement. When he chooses

<sup>213</sup> Such as M. Whitby and P. Allen, although they may have written on John and Muḏīr independently. The former is harsh on both John and Muḏīr: Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 257–58, 272; the latter is moderate: Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus, the Church Historian* (Louvain, 1981), 223–24, 234–35.

<sup>214</sup> Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, I, 249–52.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 261–63.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 260, 259.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 259–60.

to quote him approvingly, he does so when the latter speaks of the raids of the Arabs into Oriens during the Ghassānid revolt.<sup>220</sup>

Goubert's is an extraordinary treatment of this major historian of the sixth century, who has preserved for its students some of the most precious data, to be found nowhere else except in his *HE*. It is all the more remarkable coming from a scholar who, too, was a churchman like John of Ephesus. Many chapters in this volume have demonstrated the essential reliability of John, and so it is necessary to examine in some detail the strange attitude of Goubert.

1. Goubert made an unfortunate choice of a "guide" to Ghassānid history. Although the truth about Munḍir and the Ghassānids was presented with cogency by two distinguished scholars in the field, Nöldeke and Stein, corroborated by H. Lammens and J. Sauvaget,<sup>221</sup> Goubert chose to sidestep all these scholars who had carefully examined the problem of Munḍir<sup>222</sup> and the veracity of John in order to depend on the work of R. Devreesse. The latter was a competent church historian when the languages of his research were Greek and Latin but not when the Arabs and Arabic are involved. Some of the errors he made have been pointed out in previous volumes in this series,<sup>223</sup> and two others have been mentioned above.<sup>224</sup> He is simply unqualified to write on the Arabs or *Arabica*.<sup>225</sup>

2. Goubert was a great admirer of Maurice, and the latter was the inveterate enemy of Munḍir. He naturally accepted the judgment of Maurice on Munḍir and repeated it in his book. But the historian behind Munḍir was John of Ephesus; hence also his rejection of John's historiography, especially when the latter records the achievements of Munḍir and presents him as a loyal servant of the empire and not the traitor Goubert wished him to be. Thus the *prodosia* of Munḍir which has been an issue in Byzantine history becomes an issue in Byzantine historiography, since part of the reputation of John for reliability, even veracity, depends on the theme of Munḍir's *prodosia*.

3. Last but not least is the Monophysitism of John of Ephesus and how this operated to his advantage and to his image among certain scholars. Goubert subscribed to a theology accepted by the Roman church to which he belonged and, what is more, formulated by a Roman, Pope Leo, for the Council of Chalcedon, the council that was rejected by the Monophysites. It is not

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>221</sup> Whom he quotes *ibid.*, 251 note 3.

<sup>222</sup> Including the judicious R. Aigrain.

<sup>223</sup> See *BAFOC*, 145 note 28.

<sup>224</sup> On the two phylarchs, Ḥujr and Duj'um, in 586, see above, 550–53. Devreesse thought that Duj'um, the Ζώγομος of the Greek source, was a Ghassānid, whereas he was a Salīhid; see *PA*, 282 note 3.

<sup>225</sup> Goubert calls him "éminente Orientaliste" and also one "qui connaît l'Orient" (*Byzance avant l'Islam*, I, 253 note 2, 260), a strange twist to what *Orientaliste* and *l'Orient* normally connote.

difficult to see how Goubert made the transition in his thinking from Monophysite theology to Monophysite historiography:<sup>226</sup> just as John's theology was suspect, so was his historiography. This is reflected in the way he refers to John and Michael the Syrian when he makes a point of referring to their confessional persuasion as Monophysites.<sup>227</sup>

It is difficult to believe that *odium theologicum* was not an element in Goubert's thinking.<sup>228</sup> Goubert wrote before Vatican II and the inception of the ecumenical age of interfaith dialogue, which has induced a new attitude in Catholics toward Eastern Christianity. In 1984 Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I of Antioch signed a remarkable document concerning the resolution of differences between the two churches and the expression of hope for full communion in the future.<sup>229</sup> Perhaps this new relationship between the two churches will help scholars to eliminate confessional persuasion as a ground for judging a historian's reliability. In the case of Goubert, it almost reached the point of saying: Monophysite *ergo* suspect.

#### IX. TWO GREEK HISTORIANS: EVAGRIUS AND THEOPHYLACT

In addition to Procopius, Agathias, and Menander, two Greek historians, Evagrius and Theophylact, mention the Arabs in their works, and in so doing round off the Greek historiographical current of the sixth century in its negative attitude toward the Arabs.

#### Evagrius

The image of the Arabs in the pages of Evagrius is uniformly dim.<sup>230</sup> Five Arab figures appear in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and they are all condemned without appeal. His perception of these figures may be briefly presented as follows. Philip the Arab, the emperor of the third century, betrayed what became Persarmenia to the Persians; the Lakhmid king Mundir is the leader of barbarian Scenitae, who inflicted heavy losses on Byzantium during the reign of Justin I and Justinian; the Ghassānid Mundir is a traitor who refused to cross the Euphrates and thus brought to naught the Byzantine campaign against Ctesiphon; so he appears as a traitor again to both the state and to Maurice when Evagrius speaks of the clemency and gentleness of Maurice in

<sup>226</sup> A fellow Catholic scholar, the truly brilliant R. Aigrain, whose "Arabie" in the *DHGE* is a *tour de force*, did not make the transition.

<sup>227</sup> See Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 259.

<sup>228</sup> It is noteworthy that Stein and Nöldeke discounted John's Monophysitism as an element in their thinking when they accepted his account of Mundir's innocence of *prodosia*.

<sup>229</sup> See "Joint Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Ignatius Zakka I," *Diakonia* 19 (1984-85), 221-24. I am grateful to Father Sidney Griffith for providing me with a copy of this document.

<sup>230</sup> For Evagrius, see Allen, *Evagrius*, with extensive bibliography. Allen is aware of the anti-Arab attitude in Chalcedonian circles; *ibid.*, 246 note 10.

not putting him to death; his son Naaman (Nu<sup>ʿ</sup>mān) took part in the infliction of endless mischiefs in Oriens; and finally there was the Lakhmid Naaman, a "hideous and vile pagan or heathen," who had offered human sacrifice to his gods, but who finally was baptized.<sup>231</sup>

Most relevant of all to the subject of this book is his conception of the two Ghassānids, especially the first, Munḍir, and the picture he drew of him. As the careers of the two Ghassānids have been discussed at length in this volume, it will have become clear that Evagrius committed a long list of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. Munḍir, who had been the object of two treacherous conspiracies on the part of both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*, appears as himself being the traitor, after fighting valiantly for Byzantium, and furthermore he appears without any religious affiliations whatsoever, in spite of the important role he played in the history of Christianity in Oriens. His son Naaman appears as a mischievous rebel, but not a word is said about the reason why he rebelled, namely, the treacherous capture of his father.

More important than the enumeration of the list of omissions and commissions is to trace these to their roots for understanding why Evagrius wrote about the Ghassānids as he did.

1. As a historiographer he derived much from Procopius, the historian of the recent past.<sup>232</sup> The historian from Caesarea was no friend of the Arabs, and Evagrius must have been influenced by him in presenting the Arabs as traitors; the term *καταπροδόντος* appears thrice in connection with Philip and Munḍir the Ghassānid.<sup>233</sup> Noteworthy in this connection is that when he refers to Munḍir the Lakhmid and to Procopius on one occasion, he has in mind the well-known passage in Procopius in which the latter levels the charge of *prodosia* against Munḍir's father, Arethas.<sup>234</sup>

2. Evagrius wrote his *Ecclesiastical History* strictly from the Chalcedonian perspective; other doctrinal persuasions, such as Monophysitism, hardly appear in it. Munḍir was an arch-Monophysite who strove hard to compose differences and thus strengthen the Monophysite movement, which was repugnant to Evagrius and all his patrons.<sup>235</sup>

3. Evagrius, like his cousin John of Epiphania, was an employee of Gre-

<sup>231</sup> For these references to the Arabs, see Evagrius, *HE*, V.vii, IV.xii, V.xx, VI.ii, VI.xxii.

<sup>232</sup> See Allen, *Evagrius*, 9–10; on Evagrius' admiration for Procopius, see *HE*, IV.xii.

<sup>233</sup> The term appears twice in the genitive, *HE*, V.vii, p. 203, line 6; V.xx, p. 216, line 6; and once in the accusative, VI.ii, p. 223, lines 21–22.

<sup>234</sup> See *HE*, IV.xii; for the passage on the Lakhmid Munḍir, see Procopius, *History*, I.xvii.40–48; for Arethas' *prodosia*, see *ibid.*, 48, where Arethas is described as *καταπροδιδόντος*.

<sup>235</sup> Thus Munḍir appears as a rude and treacherous soldier in Evagrius without any religious affiliations.

gory, the patriarch of Antioch, and his legal adviser; he was also an admirer of his, and the fact speaks for itself. Gregory was a staunch Chalcedonian whose most ardent ecclesiastical desire was the suppression of Monophysitism and the conversion of its adherents.<sup>236</sup> He must have been particularly annoyed with Mundir who brought with him from Constantinople the imperial edict issued by Tiberius on religious tolerance toward the Monophysites, which was to be proclaimed and implemented in the Patriarchate of Antioch. Also, as is well known, Gregory participated with Magnus in the plot that finally brought about the capture of Mundir in Evaria. Evagrius, the protégé of Gregory, could not have written otherwise about Mundir.

4. Finally, Evagrius was an admirer of Maurice, whose virtues he lists in his *History*.<sup>237</sup> Maurice was also a great friend of Gregory's, who even prophesied his elevation to the throne while he was in Antioch worshiping at the church of Justinian.<sup>238</sup> And it might be added that Evagrius was the beneficiary of Maurice's friendliness since he mentions that he conferred on him the ex-consulate.<sup>239</sup> The union of patriarch and *magister* in their dislike of Mundir made certain that the protégé of the former would portray the Ghassānid king in the darkest of colors.

#### Theophylact Simocatta

The image of the Arabs in Theophylact is as dim as in Evagrius and almost for the same reasons. The Arabs receive less coverage in Theophylact than in Evagrius. With the exception of one reference to the participation of their phylarchs in the Persian wars of the mid 580s,<sup>240</sup> where the reference is neutral, Theophylact concentrates his reference to the Arabs on the Ghassānid Mundir and the joint expedition with Maurice against Ctesiphon in 581:

In this he was accompanied by the leader of the nomadic barbarians (his name was Alamundarus) who, they say, revealed the Roman attack to the Persian king; for the Saracen tribe is known to be the most unreliable and fickle, their mind is not steadfast and their judgement is not firmly grounded in prudence. Therefore, as a result of this, the king of the Persians transplanted the war to the city of Callinicum, after electing Adormaanes as a not untalented custodian of the expedition. Then, after

<sup>236</sup> On Gregory's proselytizing activities among the Monophysite Arabs, see Allen, *Evagrius*, 261–62.

<sup>237</sup> *HE*, V. xix.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, V. xxi.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, VI. xxiv, p. 241, lines 1–2.

<sup>240</sup> Theophylact, *Historiae* (Teubner), II. ii. 5. The reference is to two phylarchs, Ḥujr and Duj'um, in the campaign of Philippicus of 586.

Alamundarus had like a drone destroyed the beehives, or in other words had ruined Maurice's enterprise, the manoeuvres of the expedition against the Medes became unprofitable for the Romans; for they returned to quench the disasters at home.<sup>241</sup>

Although the term *prodosia* is not used, it is clear from reading the passage that Theophylact accuses Mundir of it, who thus aborted the whole expedition. This leads Theophylact to describe the Arabs in a series of pejoratives, and he ends by likening Mundir to a drone. In addition, the whole people to whom Mundir belonged, the Ghassānids or perhaps all the Saracens, are described as both nomadic and barbarian.

Everything about Theophylact prevented him from giving the Saracen allies a fair hearing. Although in leveling the charge of treachery, he uses φασι ("they say"), this is more likely to reflect his desire simply to indicate that he was not a witness of these events but was only quoting earlier historians, his sources.<sup>242</sup> Theophylact's perception of the Arabs may be related to the following.

1. To start with, he was an Egyptian. Since biblical times the highly sedentarized people of Egypt detested the pastoralists who threatened their frontier, and one of these groups were the Arabs from the East. This was, of course, a continuous process that persisted into the time of Theophylact.

2. Theophylact was not a witness to these events and so was not a contemporary source. He had to rely on other sources, and as he could not read Syriac, he had to depend on the Greek historians who had written their accounts of Mundir and Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. But these, as has been shown, were all writing from the point of view of the court and Constantinople, and they were the only sources at his disposal. As the most recent student of Theophylact states:<sup>243</sup> "Some of Theophylact's information was distorted by serious biases, which he reproduced in his narrative. This suggests that Theophylact's ability or willingness to criticize and cross-check his information was limited." But while he exercised good judgment in his *Kaiserkritik*<sup>244</sup> of Justin II, whom he held responsible for the woes of the empire, which he considered derived from the outbreak of Justin's Persian war, he did not apply it to Maurice and his handling of the Arab problem.

3. Furthermore, the Mundir affair belonged not to his *History* proper,

<sup>241</sup> Theophylact, *History*, trans. Whitby, 99–100; for the Greek text, see *Historiae* (Teubner), III.xvii.7–9.

<sup>242</sup> This is likely to be the case, since he goes on to revile the Saracens in such a way as to suggest that he was not only quoting but vouching for the truth of what he wrote.

<sup>243</sup> See Whitby in *History*, p. xxv.

<sup>244</sup> See *Historiae* (Teubner), III.ix.1–11.



which treated the twenty years of Maurice as an emperor (582–602), but to the prelude, the few years that preceded the elevation of Maurice. This was merely a sketch, and the historian was in a hurry to reach his subject proper. Hence he could not devote too much time and space to the Mundir affair and examine it seriously. So he accepted it uncritically from predecessors who were ill-disposed toward the Ghassānids. His main source was John of Epiphania,<sup>245</sup> a cousin of Evagrius, both legal advisors to Gregory, an arch enemy of the Ghassānid Mundir.<sup>246</sup> John was also the continuator of Menander, no friend of the Arabs either.<sup>247</sup>

4. Finally, and most important, are the circumstances under which Theophylact wrote his *History* and his attitude toward Maurice, whose reign of twenty years forms the subject matter of his work. Most probably Patriarch Sergius<sup>248</sup> inspired Theophylact to write his *History*, one among other historical works that were produced "in the optimistic mood of the late 620's, and indeed Heraclius's triumph may well have been the major stimulus that re-awakened interest in the different types of historical writings."<sup>249</sup> The great *coup* by which Maurice extended assistance to Chosroes against Bahrām, and which ended with the acquisition of Mesopotamia and the relatively long peace, could be viewed in Heraclian times as a great Byzantine victory over Persia on the part of Maurice, worthy of a theme for a historian. Thus Theophylact would write a *History* that would glorify Maurice.

Even if Theophylact was not an admirer of Maurice, he could not but present a *History* that was a glorification of the reign. He was writing under Heraclius, and the latter appeared on the stage of Byzantine history as an avenger of the "good" Emperor Maurice against the tyrant Phocas. Shortly after his arrival in Constantinople, Heraclius organized a funeral for Maurice, and Theophylact delivered a panegyric to commemorate Maurice and his family.<sup>250</sup> So Theophylact could write in only one way about Maurice, as a historian writing in the Heraclian age and in the period of euphoria that followed the great Persian victory.

Consequently, in the description of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, especially the relations of Mundir with Maurice, Theophylact had no choice but to

<sup>245</sup> See Whitby in *History*, p. xxi, and Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 222–27. It should be noted in this connection that not only was Theophylact's account of the years preceding the accession of Maurice a prelude, but it was also such in the work of his source, John of Epiphania.

<sup>246</sup> John of Epiphania's account of Maurice's quarrel with Mundir has not survived, but what he would have said is clear from the account of his cousin Evagrius, which has.

<sup>247</sup> On his use of Menander, see Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice*, 229–30.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>250</sup> Whitby in *History*, p. xiv.

give the official Byzantine version of what happened between the two, namely, that of Maurice and Chalcedonian Constantinople.

#### X. JOHN MOSCHUS: *PRATUM SPIRITUALE*

The *Pratum Spirituale* supplements the *Vitae* of Cyril of Scythopolis on monastic life in Palestine in the sixth century and the early part of the seventh.<sup>251</sup> But as far as the Arabs are concerned, it is much less important since it limits itself to the narration of individual encounters of some hermits and monks in the deserts of southern Palestine with some Saracens. Unlike Cyril, the author is unsympathetic to the Saracens; but in spite of this, his account is valuable for the image of the Arabs toward the end of the sixth century. His work contains four episodes involving the Saracens.<sup>252</sup> They are told on the authority of monks and hermits, and so belong to the tradition of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.<sup>253</sup>

#### A

1. The first episode tells the story of a youth who was captured by three Saracens, one of whom spoke Greek, who wanted to bring him back to their pagan priest to be offered as a human sacrifice. Father Nicholas tries in vain to save the youth. Finally he prays, and the three Saracens are possessed by a demon and kill one another. Thus the youth, who hailed from Tyre, was saved and joined the monastic community. The scene of this encounter is east of the Dead Sea, between the Arnon and Aidon.<sup>254</sup> It is the most interesting of the four episodes recounted by John Moschus.

The first important datum is the fact that this episode took place during the revolt of the Ghassānid Nu'mān, and it is in the context of his raids against Oriens at the beginning of the reign of Maurice that the episode is set. There is no indication at all in the text that these three Saracens belonged to Nu'mān's troops. What is significant is that the *Pratum Spirituale* reflects the strong impact that the Ghassānid revolt had on Oriens, reaching the southern

<sup>251</sup> For the text of the *Pratum Spirituale*, see PG 87 (3), cols. 2851–3111. The translations of this text may be consulted: *Le pré spirituel*, trans. M. J. Rouët de Journel, SC 12 (Paris, 1946); and the more recent Italian translation with critical notes and commentary by R. Maisano, *Giovanni Mosco: Il prato*, *Storie e testi* 1 (Naples, 1982). For a recent succinct treatment of Moschus, see *ODB*, II, s.v. Moschus.

<sup>252</sup> The commentaries of the text of the *Pratum Spirituale* offer little or no help on these four passages concerning the Saracens; see the preceding note.

<sup>253</sup> See PG 87 (3), chap. 155, cols. 3023–24.

<sup>254</sup> The Ἀνωῶνα of the text has been rightly corrected by R. Maisano as Ἀρνωῶνα; see Maisano, *Il prato*, 246 note 155. The Arnon is one of the tributaries that flow into the Dead Sea, while the Aidon is an affluent that flows into the Arnon. Nowadays the former is the Wādī al-Mujīb and the latter is Seil Heidan; for both see F. M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris, 1933), I, 177, 487–88.

part of Palestine,<sup>255</sup> and thus confirms the account of John of Ephesus in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

The reference to the pagan priest in the reply of the three Saracens to Father Nicholas evidences the fact that, even as late as the ninth decade of the sixth century, there were pagan pockets in the Holy Land and, what is more, that human sacrifice had not become an extinct ritual in pagan practice. It calls to mind a similar episode in the *Narrationes* of St. Nilus for Sinai.<sup>256</sup> The datum may be added to others for the survival of paganism in late antiquity.

Interesting is the fact that one of the Saracens spoke Greek and was thus able to communicate with Father Nicholas, the narrator of the episode.

2. Next in importance is the account of Sisinnius the anchorite with a *Saracenissa*, a Saracen woman who disrobed before him and offered her body. The anchorite spoke to her in "Hebrew" and found out that she had disrobed because she was hungry. Then he offered her a portion of the little that he himself had and continued to do so every day until he left the region.<sup>257</sup> The scene is set near the Monastery of the Eunuchs, Jericho, near the Jordan.

Noteworthy in this episode is the reason for the woman's attempted offering of herself—hunger. It is not often realized by Byzantine writers that the Saracen raids they recorded were not always inspired by greed or a desire to pillage for its own sake but by the elemental force of hunger, which at times drove the Saracens to raid the Roman frontier.<sup>258</sup>

More interesting is the fact that the Greek-speaking father Sisinnius learned the vernacular of the region. The Greek says he spoke to the Saracen woman in Hebrew (Ἑβραϊστί), which was understood by translators to mean Syriac.<sup>259</sup> It is possible that the woman spoke Syriac or Palestinian Aramaic, but it is also possible, perhaps more natural, to suppose it was Arabic, since presumably she was not an urbanite but a pastoralist roaming the deserts

<sup>255</sup> The Greek text on Nu'mān reads as follows: ὅταν Ναμηὶς ὁ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν φύλαρχος τὴν πραιίδα πεποιήκεν. PG 87 (3), chap. 155, col. 3024.

Rouët de Journal has no clear conception of the phylarchs as federate chiefs allied with Byzantium; see *Le pré spirituel*, 209 note 1. Maisano unfortunately confuses the Ghassānid Nu'mān with his Lakhmid namesake and calls him *brigante*; see Maisano, *Il prato*, 273 note 155. Whatever Nu'mān was, he was certainly not a brigand, whether Ghassānid or Lakhmid. Maisano says that Nu'mān was baptized in 592/93. In so saying he confused the two Nu'māns, the Lakhmid and the Ghassānid, and the two chapters in Evagrius, *HE*, VI.2 and 22. The Nu'mān of chap. 2 is the Ghassānid who was born a Christian; the Nu'mān of chap. 22 is the Lakhmid who was baptized roughly at that date. Further on this, see below, 600–601.

<sup>256</sup> On this see *BAFIC*, 135.

<sup>257</sup> See PG 87 (3), chap. 136, cols. 2999–3000.

<sup>258</sup> For a raid explicitly inspired by drought, and recorded by Marcellinus Comes, see above, 194–96.

<sup>259</sup> The Latin version has *syriace*, PG 87 (3), col. 2999B; the French has *syriaque*: Rouët de Journal, *Le pré spirituel*, 187; the Italian has *lingua siriaca*: Maisano, *Il prato*, 158.

of southern Palestine. However, there is no way of deciding with certainty what 'Εβραϊστί means in this context.

Less important are two accounts of encounters with Saracens, one in the desert of Koutila to the west of the Dead Sea and the other in Clysmā, modern Suez.

3. The first involved the monk Ianthos. Some Saracens come upon him and one of them draws his sword and tries to kill him. The monk prays, and the earth opens and swallows up the Saracen.<sup>260</sup>

4. The second concerns a Saracen who goes hunting to the mountain of Father Anthony near Clysmā and sees one of the monks reading. He approaches the monk, but the latter stretches out his right hand and says "stop," and so the Saracen could not move from his place to which he was fixed for two days and two nights.<sup>261</sup>

In the *Pratum Spirituale*, John Moschus appears as a writer extremely antipathetic to the Saracens, unlike the writers of the *Vitae*, Cyril of Scythopolis, and of the *Historia Religiosa*, Theodoret. The few facts that are known about him account for this attitude. He was a Cilician by birth, an ecclesiastic who wandered to the Holy Land and Egypt, spending time in the monasteries of the very region that presented the Arabs as Saracens, raiders and pastoralists, either still pagan or slightly tintured with Christianity. Hence the Arabs he knew were Saracens who were attacking the holy men of Christianity, the anchorites and eremites of the region.

His theology was Chalcedonian, and he was a pupil and close friend of another pillar of Byzantine orthodoxy, Sophronius, the future patriarch of Jerusalem, to whom he dedicated his *Pratum Spirituale*. It is only natural that he should have harbored ill will toward the people who to him were either heathen Saracens roaming the deserts of southern Palestine or zealous Monophysites, such as the Ghassānids, who supported the Monophysite movement in Oriens throughout the sixth century and thus from his point of view were heretics. That these Monophysite Arabs also revolted and shook Oriens to its foundation was not an added attraction since this allied the Ghassānids in his perception to the Saracens—the pastoralists, raiders of the *limes*.

The date of his death is disputed. According to one view, it occurred in 619 or 634. Critical opinion is nowadays in favor of the latter date.<sup>262</sup> If indeed this was the year of his death, he would have been contemporary with the first years of Islam and its offensive against Oriens, and so this would not have endeared the Arabs to his heart. Thus John Moschus may be added to the list of Byzantine writers of the sixth century who wrote negatively about the

<sup>260</sup> See PG 87 (3), chap. 109, cols. 2957–58.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., chap. 133, cols. 2995–98.

<sup>262</sup> See the succinct article and bibliography on Moschus in *ODB*, II, s.v. Moschus.

Arabs. The list includes Procopius, Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact. Unlike them, Moschus was an ecclesiastic and thus reflects the views of the official orthodox *ecclesia*, as the others reflect those of the *imperium*.

## B

P. Goubert inherited Moschus' antipathy to the Saracens and, what is more, involved the Ghassānids in it. He pointedly gathered together three of the episodes recounted by Moschus, missing one, and presented them after his chapter on the Ghassānids.<sup>263</sup> That chapter also opened with a broadside against the Ghassānids and closed with another.<sup>264</sup>

An analysis of the passages in Moschus has shown that these were isolated episodes involving Saracens who hailed from some pagan pockets in Oriens (in southern Palestine and Sinai) and that the general condemnation, expressed and implied by Goubert and put in the mouth of Moschus, does not extend or apply to generations of Saracens who were the protectors of the Byzantine *limes*. The unfortunate term *Saraceni*, used to denote both of these, obscures the distinction between them and conduces to confused perceptions.

Goubert was right in reflecting Moschus' antipathies to the Saracens, but not when he involved the Ghassānids in all this. According to him, the first episode, that of the three Saracens who had captured the youth from Tyre, belonged to the troops of the Ghassānid Nu'mān. A close examination of this passage in Moschus shows that this is not the case.

1. Moschus dated the episode to the beginning of the reign of Maurice, which indeed witnessed the revolt of Nu'mān the Ghassānid. That is the extent of the involvement of the Ghassānids in Moschus' account of this episode; it is simply contemporaneous. The concurrence did not escape the notice of Moschus, and he simply noted it. He may have done so because of the general disorder that then obtained in Oriens, and it was natural for him to do so. But nowhere in the account is there any evidence that these three Saracens were part of Nu'mān's army or that the episode took place during any of his raids.

2. It is inconceivable that Nu'mān, the fervent Christian, would set upon the hermits of the region, coming as he did from a family that paid special attention to the building of monasteries.

3. Goubert even goes so far as to say that the Saracens' smattering of Greek argues in the same direction. This is curious reasoning. The Arabs of the region had been exposed to Hellenism since Alexander conquered the region, and if one of the Saracens could speak a few words of Greek, this

<sup>263</sup> See Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 261–63.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 261 and the last sentence in the final footnote, p. 263 note 3.



cannot be related to the supposition that he belonged to the troops of Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān. And it is far from certain that Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān's *troops* could speak Greek.<sup>265</sup>

4. Last but not least is the fact that these Saracens, according to Moschus or his informant, were clearly pagans who wanted to bring the youth to their pagan priest so that he might make of him a human sacrifice. As has been indicated, this points to a surviving pagan pocket in the region. It is inconceivable that such troops could have belonged to the zealously Christian Ghassānid army.

In addition to misinterpreting the passage in the *Pratum Spirituale* on the Ghassānid Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān, Goubert misinterpreted the chapter on the conversion of the Lakhmid Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān as presented by Evagrius. He devoted a chapter to his conversion which he placed immediately after the one on Moschus, and makes a number of completely untrue statements on that conversion:<sup>266</sup> (1) While the relations of the Ghassānids with Byzantium deteriorated, those of the Lakhmids were improving, both with Byzantium and its church. (2) Touched by grace and the victory of Maurice, Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān asked for and received baptism. (3) It was Gregory, the patriarch of Antioch, that baptized Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān.<sup>267</sup>

All these statements are false, as the chapter in Evagrius amply shows and, more important, as all the other sources on the Lakhmids indicate. The most acute observer of the Lakhmid scene, G. Rothstein, wrote a monograph on the Lakhmids as brilliant as that of Nöldeke on the Ghassānids. If Goubert had consulted it on this subject, he would have been better informed. Rothstein assembled all the rival claims for the conversion of Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān but never mentions Gregory. Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān was converted to, and baptized into, the Nestorian confession, as indicated cogently by Rothstein, who depended on reliable Syriac sources, and it was of course the only form of Christianity acceptable to the Persian overlord of Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān, who became favorable to Christianity in general but not to its official Chalcedonian form.<sup>268</sup> In fact he could tolerate only Nestorian Christianity, opposed to Byzantium, for obvious reasons.

Rothstein's conclusions on this point have been vindicated in the most detailed and adequate manner by the recent publication of a most important Arabic manuscript on pre-Islamic times. It discusses the conversion of Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān in great detail and makes amply clear with documents that it was to

<sup>265</sup> On Andreas as an interpreter for federate troops, see above, 553.

<sup>266</sup> For this see Goubert, *Byzance*, I, 264–65.

<sup>267</sup> Perhaps related to this unfounded claim is Goubert's saying that he crossed the frontier: "il franchit le Limes." If Gregory had done that, his trip to Hīra to baptize Nu<sup>c</sup>-mān would be credible. But the Greek of Evagrius has no such word; it has περινοστῶν, which means "to go around, to visit," not "cross."

<sup>268</sup> For all this, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 142–43.



Nestorianism and not at the hands of Chalcedonian Gregory but of Sham'un (Simon) ibn-Jābir, the Nestorian bishop of Ḥīra.<sup>269</sup>

#### XI. POPE GREGORY AND MUNDIR: JULY A.D. 600

If doubts can be raised on whether or not Maurice released Nu'mān from exile in Constantinople, or even whether his release was a subject of negotiations between the Ghassānids and the imperial government, there is no doubt whatsoever concerning his father Munḍir and his eventual release not in the reign of Maurice but in that of Phocas. It is an exciting story that involved both the Byzantine Occident as well as the Orient, in which participated the Ghassānids from Jābiya, Innocentius, the praetorian prefect of Africa from Carthage, Pope Gregory in Rome, and Emperor Maurice in Constantinople.

Negotiations for the release of Munḍir are clearly expressed in one of the letters of Pope Gregory<sup>270</sup> addressed to Innocentius, in which *inter alia* he says that he acceded to the latter's wishes concerning Munḍir and expresses a hope that his intercession in behalf of Munḍir might prove successful with Maurice, since he (the pope) does not stint his assistance to those who are afflicted: "De Anamundaro autem quae scripsistis fecimus, sed uoluntatem utinam sequatur effectus, quia, quantum ad nos pertinet, afflictis intercessionis nostrae solacium non negamus."<sup>271</sup>

The importance of this reference to the Ghassānid Munḍir, involving as it does Pope Gregory in the fortunes of the Ghassānids, deserves a detailed analysis.

1. The chronology of the letters of Pope Gregory has been worked out by P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann and has to be followed. According to them, the letter is to be dated July, A.D. 600, that is, toward the end of Maurice's reign,<sup>272</sup> and this means that Munḍir's exile extended over a long period of time since he was sent to Sicily in the early 580s.

2. The name of Munḍir is spelled incorrectly as "Anamundarus," with an *n* instead of an *l* in the usual spelling, "Alamundarus." Such orthographic errors are not uncommon in the transliteration of Arabic names into Greek or Latin; John of Biclar, slightly before Pope Gregory, transliterated the same name as "Aramundarus."<sup>273</sup>

<sup>269</sup> See Abū al-Baqā' al-Ḥillī, *al-Manāqib al-Mazydiyya*, ed. S. Darādika and M. Khuraysāt (Amman, 1984), I, 266–69.

<sup>270</sup> For the standard edition of his letters, see *S. Gregorii Magni Opera: Registrum Epistularum*, 2 vols., ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140–140A (Turnhout, 1982); see vol. II, pp. 844–45.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 845, lines 23–25.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 844.

<sup>273</sup> See above, 384. The correct identification of the Anamundarus of this letter with the Ghassānid Munḍir was successfully and incontrovertibly made by P. Goubert against P. Hartmann; see "Notes prosopographiques sur la Sicile byzantine à l'époque de l'empereur Maurice et

3. It is noteworthy that Mundir is not referred to by anything except his name, possibly because he was well known to his correspondent, Innocentius, who had written to the pope on his behalf. On the other hand, the omission may be significant in reflecting the fact that he was a well-known figure in the corridors of power, spiritual as well as temporal. Since he had been deposed by Maurice, he is naturally not referred to as "king of the Saracens," which he is in the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar.<sup>274</sup>

4. The large-hearted pope apparently took an interest in the release of Mundir, and his letter could reflect deep sympathy for Mundir's plight. The term *afflictis* in the plural might be generic or might refer to the fact that Mundir was not alone in his exile but had with him his wife, his sons, and a companion, Sergius.

The letter raises questions about the involvement in Mundir's release of Innocentius and the pope, and about Maurice's reaction. How did Innocentius, the praetorian prefect of distant Africa, become involved in the affairs of the Ghassānid royal house in Oriens, and who was the link between the two?

1. The Ghassānids were soldiers and, what is more, Monophysites. So the Dyophysite see of Rome could hardly have been a port of call for them. They had to ask for the release of their chief through others who were acceptable to the pope. In view of the close relationship that obtained between Rome and Africa, and so between the pope and the praetorian prefect, Innocentius was the right link between the two parties.<sup>275</sup>

2. Innocentius hailed from Africa, since the pope refers to St. Augustine in the same letter as his *patriota*. As there is no evidence that he served in the East,<sup>276</sup> he could not have known the Ghassānids personally. So he must have been approached by the latter through someone else who traveled from the East to Africa. The figure who might have acted as such, since he served in the East and knew the Ghassānids, and then was appointed to the exarchate of Africa, was the elder Heraclius. He commanded in the East and took part in the Persian wars in the 580s, and most probably came in touch with the Ghassānids or the Arabs who were fighting the Persians<sup>277</sup> in the campaigns of 586 and 587. The return of the Ghassānids to the Byzantine fold under Jafna<sup>278</sup> in 587 must have been known to him. So it is possible that he was approached

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du pape saint Grégoire le grand," in *Atti dello VIII congresso internazionale di studi bizantini (Palermo, 1951)*, *Studi bizantini e neoellenici* 7 (Rome, 1953), I, 365–66.

<sup>274</sup> See above, 384.

<sup>275</sup> Clearly reflected in the first part of the letter, in which the pope congratulates Innocentius on his elevation to the prefecture of Africa.

<sup>276</sup> On Innocentius, see *PLRE*, III, s.v.

<sup>277</sup> For the elder Heraclius, see *PLRE*, III, s.v. Heraclius 3. For the participation of the Arabs in the campaigns of 586 and 587, see above, 550–56.

<sup>278</sup> On this see above, 556–60, 562–63.

by the Ghassānids for the release of Muṅḍir after his appointment to the exarchate of Africa became known. What militates against this view is the chronology of the exarchs of Africa. Gennadius' exarchate<sup>279</sup> came to an end in 598, while that of Heraclius the Elder did not start until 602. But critical opinion is divided on the date of his appointment to Africa.<sup>280</sup> According to one view, he may have already been in Africa around the year 600. If so, he could easily have been the intermediary between the Ghassānids and the pope. As he was a newcomer to Africa, he could have asked his praetorian prefect, Innocentius, himself an African and well known to the pope, to write on behalf of Muṅḍir.

Pope Gregory's involvement in the Muṅḍir affair is even more intriguing and repays some careful examination.

1. The Ghassānid attempt to involve Pope Gregory was perfectly well advised. Both he and Muṅḍir were in the Occident, and the pope must have been aware of Muṅḍir's presence in Sicily even before being approached. The only power in the Occident that could intercede with Maurice was the pope, and so the Ghassānid attempt to involve him was sound strategy.

2. The pope's sympathy with Muṅḍir, the chief of the Monophysite Ghassānids, is noteworthy. In addition to his large humanity, this may be accounted for by the fact that he knew much about Muṅḍir firsthand. Gregory was *apocrisiarius* to Pope Pelagius II from ca. 579/80 to 586, and so he was in Constantinople when Muṅḍir arrived in 580 and received the crown from Maurice after striving to bring about peace in the Monophysite church and its possible reconciliation with the Dyophysite imperial government, which must have appealed to Gregory.

3. His antipathy to Maurice may also explain his sympathies with Muṅḍir. He was still in Constantinople when Maurice treacherously intrigued with Tiberius for Muṅḍir's arrest. Later disagreements between Maurice and Gregory, after he became pope, must also have inclined him to think of Muṅḍir as a victim of Maurice's caprice.<sup>281</sup>

4. Finally, it is not altogether unlikely that the pope whose concern for the primacy of the Roman see is well known and also his staunch support of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo, his predecessor, may have thought that helping the powerful and influential Monophysite chief could be a step in the right direction which would bear fruit on Muṅḍir's return to Oriens.

<sup>279</sup> For Gennadius, see *PLRE*, III, s.v.

<sup>280</sup> On this, see P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1965), II, 214–15. Pope Gregory is known to have written to the bishop of Arabia; see *BASIC* I.2, 936. This bishop, of the same province as the Ghassānid phylarch, could have acted as intermediary, too; but he would have written to the pope directly; besides, he was Dyophysite.

<sup>281</sup> On the relations between the pope and Maurice, see Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, II, 129–77. Further on this, see below, 606–7.

Maurice's reply to the letter of the pope on Mundir has not survived, but it is safe to assume that it was negative, since it is known that Mundir remained in Sicily until the accession of Phocas.<sup>282</sup> This was a measure of the ill-feeling that Maurice nursed toward the Arab king. Even after seventeen years of hard exile in the West and the intercession of the pope notwithstanding, the emperor remained adamant in his resolve to keep Mundir in exile.<sup>283</sup>

## XII. THE CONTROVERSIAL REIGN OF MAURICE

The reign of Maurice is one of the most controversial in the history of Byzantium. J. B. Bury, the distinguished Byzantinist who died in the first quarter of this century, gave his considered judgment of the emperor as follows: "Maurice gives us the melancholy impression of a prince who, possessing many good qualities and cherishing many good purposes, was completely ineffectual."<sup>284</sup>

Since Bury wrote, the stock of Maurice has risen high. A. Vasiliev, speaking of the four successors of Justinian, wrote: "The most outstanding of these rulers was the energetic soldier and able leader Maurice."<sup>285</sup> An even more favorable judgment came from G. Ostrogorsky, who considered him "one of the most outstanding of Byzantine rulers."<sup>286</sup> These judgments on Maurice were warm and placed the emperor in a favorable light, but they appeared in general histories of Byzantium and not in a specialized monograph. It was, therefore, Paul Goubert, who wrote a two-volume work on the reign of Maurice, that gave the most flattering evaluation of Maurice.<sup>287</sup> Most recently another monograph on Maurice appeared, in which Michael Whitby continued the pro-Maurician tradition, although his judgment is much more measured and controlled than that of Goubert.<sup>288</sup>

But critical opinion of Maurice and his reign remains divided.<sup>289</sup> As the

<sup>282</sup> On this see below, 618.

<sup>283</sup> While speaking of the "gloire" and "clémence" of Maurice in connection with Mundir's exile, Goubert remarks: "un exil en Sicile est toujours agréable!"; "Notes prosopographiques," 365.

<sup>284</sup> Bury, *HLRE*, II, 86.

<sup>285</sup> A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, Wisc., 1952), 169. The first English edition of his work appeared in 1928-29.

<sup>286</sup> G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. J. Hussey (Oxford, 1968), 80. Compared to Ostrogorsky's, the judgment of Vasiliev sounds controlled since he made it within the context of only the four successors of Justinian, of whom the first was unbalanced and became actually insane, the second was meek and ineffectual, while the fourth was a disaster in every sense.

<sup>287</sup> P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1951-65).

<sup>288</sup> M. Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian* (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>289</sup> See for example W. Kaegi's review of M. Whitby's book in *Speculum* 65 (1990), 780-82, and David Olster's in *American Historical Review* 95 (1990), 1502-3. For a judgment that views the reign with mixed feelings, see A. N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Amsterdam, 1968), I, 40.



Arab policy of Maurice has been subjected to a detailed scrutiny in this volume, and as this policy is eventually related to the Arab Conquests of the seventh century, a reevaluation of the reign has become necessary. But this reevaluation will be one-sided if it limits itself to the Arab profile of Maurice's reign. It will, therefore, take into account some other relevant matters, however briefly, and then concentrate on the Oriental profile, Persian as well as Arab.

## A

1. One of the bases on which admirers of Maurice have rested their case for his military dispositions and conduct of foreign policy was that the emperor happened to be a soldier who, moreover, had written a classic on *ars militaris*, namely, the *Stratēgikon*. So he knew what he was doing. Recent research has shown that this is not the case, and that Maurice may only have revised it or made a few additions. The present writer has indicated some of these possibly Maurician additions, for example, passages on the *foederati*, which, it has been argued, reflected a short-sighted policy that led to the suppression of the Ghassānid phylarchate with dire consequences for Byzantium.<sup>290</sup>

2. Judgments on Maurice in the twentieth century, that is, made thirteen or fourteen centuries after his reign, have their special value, the advantage of distance which perhaps enables evaluators to perform objectively. Yet what contemporaries thought of him is also of considerable importance. The three historians who had occasion to mention him—Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact—have been analyzed in previous sections.<sup>291</sup> The first of these maintained an independent judgment when he thought the emperor belonged to the "depressive" type, while the sycophancy of the second and the third has often been pointed out.<sup>292</sup> But the testimony of one more contemporary is especially important, and he is one whose integrity is beyond doubt, none other than Pope Gregory, who had known the emperor when he was an *apocrisarius* in Constantinople and who later corresponded with him concerning conditions in Italy. The interest of the correspondence is that while Theophylact's *History* is a monologue in favor of Maurice, the correspondence between pope and emperor represents a dialogue, which enables both points of view to be studied.<sup>293</sup> What is relevant in this connection is the dispute on handling the Lombard problem in Italy. The pope, who was on the spot and

<sup>290</sup> On Maurice and the *Stratēgikon*, see above, 568–83.

<sup>291</sup> On these three historians, see above, 331–37, 592–97.

<sup>292</sup> For *Kaiserkritik* of Maurice, see F. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie* (Munich, 1971), 49–52, 54–57.

<sup>293</sup> On relations between Pope Gregory and Maurice, see A. Fliche and V. Martin, *Histoire de l'Église* (Paris, 1947), V, 55–69, and Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, II.2, pp. 129–39.

had acquitted himself remarkably well in defending Rome against the Lombards, is rebuked by the emperor, who was in faraway Constantinople, with no firsthand knowledge of the situation in Italy; he accuses the pope of being duped by the Lombard Ariulph and actually calls him "*fatuus*." The pope did not hesitate to defend himself and his position.<sup>294</sup> These letters become valuable documents for the evaluation of Maurice, because they are contemporary and come from one who was both well informed and above reproach morally; therefore, they could be taken into account in evaluating Maurice and his policy of dealing with the "barbarians." All this invites comparison with the quarrel between Mundir and Maurice which led to the ill-advised decision to suppress the Ghassānid phylarchate.<sup>295</sup>

3. Maurice's reputation has been enhanced by the fact that he was succeeded by Phocas. The latter has been considered a "fell monster" whose reign was a disaster; hence by contrast the preceding reign appears a prosperous one which was terminated by the heinous assassination of Maurice and his family by Phocas. The reputation of Maurice received further enhancement by the fact that Heraclius, hailed as the savior of the empire from the "fell monster," waged war against Phocas after he had posed as an avenger of Maurice. However, a careful analysis of the circumstances that brought Phocas to power has shown that it was Maurice who brought the catastrophe upon himself through his own incompetence in handling troops; he and his commanders were ultimately responsible for the successful uprisings that cost him his life and his throne.

## B

The preceding paragraphs on Maurice are not crucial for the question of evaluation, important as they must remain. What is much more important is Maurice's handling of the Persian and Arab problems in the East. It was these two problems that came to the fore in the reign of Heraclius during which the Persian and the Arab wars raged and which ended in a disaster for Byzantium. So the true evaluation of Maurice must rest on answers to the following questions: in what respects was Maurice responsible for them, and to what extent can the genesis of the two problems be traced to his reign?

<sup>294</sup> Pope Gregory wrote many letters to Maurice and his household, which are extant. The most relevant is the letter dated June 595, in which he defends himself; see *S. Gregorii Magni Opera: Registrum Epistularum*, I, pp. 304-7.

<sup>295</sup> The quarrel presents the problem of the perversity of the emperor, his unenlightened interference in matters on which he was not an expert. Just as Gregory knew the Lombard situation better than Maurice did, so Mundir knew the military situation, involving the Lakhmids, the Persians, and the campaign against Ctesiphon, better than the emperor did. In the case of Gregory, his letters in self-defense have survived; in the case of Mundir, they have not. On the letters sent by Mundir to Tiberius, complaining about Maurice, see above, 443-45.



1. The Persian problem: This is the more important of the two, since the Arab problem derives from it. Historians of the reign consider Maurice's solution of the Persian problem a good one. They point out that the peace made with Persia in 592 enabled the empire to fight only on one front—in the Balkans—and thus solve the Avar problem.<sup>296</sup> There is something to be said for this view, but a closer examination of the problem leads to different conclusions and reveals flaws in Maurice's negotiations with the Persians.

Although it must have been difficult at the time to choose between supporting Chosroes Parviz or the rebel Bahrām Chūbīn,<sup>297</sup> the course taken by Maurice turned out to be the wrong one since only a few years after the peace Parviz showed signs of restlessness, then actually opened an offensive against Byzantium in the reign of Phocas which led to the disastrous war of Heraclius' reign. Nothing could have been worse than this course which the events took. So it is possible to argue that Maurice had backed the wrong horse. Bahrām, as a usurper, lacked legitimacy and his position would have been weaker in Persia than a restored legitimate ruler such as Parviz; hence he would have been less disposed to undertake adventurous wars and may have been more dependent on Byzantium for support.

If the preceding is debatable, another point concerning Maurice's handling of the Persian problem is not so debatable. Maurice's big mistake was the annexation of Persarmenia in 592. This was a province to which the Persians were very sensitive, and rightly so, since its occupation by the Byzantines placed the latter in a favorable position to invade Babylonia and brought them within striking distance of Ctesiphon itself.<sup>298</sup> Maurice showed no statesmanship in concluding this deal since magnanimity then would have been good diplomacy.<sup>299</sup> As it turned out, the loss of Persarmenia rankled in Parviz'

<sup>296</sup> Stratos (*Byzantium*, 40) considers the peace with Persia was "a purely personal triumph" for Maurice. For a recent article that treats this period of the revolt of Bahrām Chūbīn, with implications for the Byzantine-Sasanid conflict during the reign of Heraclius, see D. Frendo, "Theophylact Simocatta on the Revolt of Bahram Chobin and the Early Career of Khusrau II," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, n.s. 3 (1989), 77–87.

<sup>297</sup> It is interesting to note that the patriarch, John the Faster, counseled Maurice against accepting Chosroes' appeal for help, on the ground that he was a treacherous creature who could not be trusted because he had assassinated his own father, Hormisdas; see *The Chronicle of John, Bishop of Nikiou*, trans. R. H. Charles (London-Oxford, 1916), 156.

<sup>298</sup> Of course the Persians considered Byzantium, and Rome before it, as usurpers in the Near East—empires that had possessed themselves of former Persian territory that extended as far as the Strymon. That this Achaemenid dream was still alive in the consciousness of Sasanid Persia is clear from the letter of Shāpūr II to Constantius, preserved by Ammianus Marcellinus; see *BAFOC*, 95.

<sup>299</sup> Although it should be remembered that it was Chosroes himself who offered to give up Persian Persarmenia and also Daras and Martyropolis to the Byzantines when he first wrote to Maurice appealing for help against Bahrām; see Theophylact, *History*, trans. Whitby, 123. Even so, Maurice should have resisted the temptation of accepting the cession of Persarmenia by Persia, since that region had long been a bone of contention between the two empires.

consciousness and, as is well known, the "peace treaty of one war is sometimes the cause of the next."<sup>300</sup>

The importance of the loss of Persarmenia becomes clearer when placed against the larger background of the image of Chosroes among his people and after the conclusion of the unconscionable peace. Here was an emperor who had appealed to the secular enemy for help, who was returned to his throne by Byzantine swords, who acquiesced in the loss of Persian territory to the Byzantines, and who dallied with a universalistic proselytizing religion, Christianity. All this explains the sudden and violent reaction of Chosroes to the fall of Maurice<sup>301</sup> and the ferocious war he waged against Byzantium. He had to retrieve his reputation for patriotism among his people and refurbish his image, tarnished as it was by his dealings with Maurice and by the peace treaty.

When it is remembered that the Persian war of the reign of Heraclius, waged by Chosroes, was militarily the greatest catastrophe of the proto-Byzantine period, which also made possible the Arab war, the full implications of the mistakes made by Maurice in negotiating the Peace of 592 become amply clear.

2. The Arab problem: Something has been said on this in previous chapters of this volume,<sup>302</sup> and much more will be said in the third part of this trilogy. Suffice it to say here that the suppression of the Ghassānid phylarchate and its restoration with a reduced status are attributable directly to Maurice. The consequences of all this may be briefly presented as follows. It led to the weakening of the Arab federate shield, which was forged for confronting the Persians and their Arab federates. The powerful Ghassānid contingent under Mundir, which had proved to be invincible in five lightning campaigns against the Lakhmids, was beaten in 613, when it had to face not the Arab federates of Persia but the Persian imperial army in its irresistible advance through Oriens.

This Persian war of the reign of Heraclius, which ultimately can be laid at Maurice's door, badly mauled the Ghassānids and eliminated them for some fifteen years as a force in Oriens and in western Arabia. In the meantime the power of Islam grew undisturbed and most probably would have taken a different turn, if it had to contend from the very beginning with a strong Ghassānid presence in the region. But in 636 the Ghassānids, fighting with the Byzantine imperial army, were beaten by a united Arabia under the banner of Islam, as they had been in 613 by the Persians.

<sup>300</sup> As has been said most appropriately of the Treaty of Versailles, signed in June 1919.

<sup>301</sup> Bury (*HLRE*, 198) well understood the true motives of Chosroes in starting the war, not related to the death of Maurice.

<sup>302</sup> See the section on the charge of *prodosia*, above, 439–41.

The foregoing analysis of the various facets of the reign of Maurice has thus resulted in an even more negative evaluation of the reign than previous ones, as new dimensions have been explored, pertaining to the peace with Persia and the suppression of the Ghassānid phylarchate. The two catastrophes of the reign of Heraclius for Byzantium, namely, the Persian War and the Arab Conquests, have been shown to have had their roots not only in the reign of Maurice but in measures actually taken by him. The exploration of these new dimensions of Maurice's reign have thus left to his credit few achievements, such as the establishment of the two exarchates in the West. This exploration justifies a return to Bury's evaluation of Maurice as "completely ineffectual" and even the severer, more recent judgment that "Maurice was a colossal and tragic failure as an emperor."<sup>303</sup>

#### APPENDIX I

##### Maurice, the Arabs, and Arabissos

In *BAFIC* the present writer has argued that the Anatolian town Arabissos, in Third Armenia, is possibly related to the ethnic term "Arab." It was also suggested that some Arab groups may have settled there in pre-Islamic times, in the fourth or fifth century, such as Iyād, and that the town may derive its name from this settlement of Arabs in it.<sup>1</sup>

In his review of *BAFIC*, Klaus Belke<sup>2</sup> drew attention to the fact that Iyād could not have caused the town to be called Arabissos because it existed before the fourth or fifth century, during which I had suggested that Iyād emigrated to Anatolia and settled in what later became Arabissos. The criticism is valid, and a fourth-century emigration of Iyād must be withdrawn from the discussion of the etymology of Arabissos, as indeed the town appears attested many times in the *Itinerarium Antoninianum*, which is dated to the period before the fourth century.

However, the data assembled in *BAFIC* for the association of Arabissos with the Arabs remain striking, and this leads to the following restatement of that possible association in light of Belke's point. The period of Iyād's emigration is disputed, and there are accounts that date it earlier than the fifth century.<sup>3</sup> But better still is the fact that other Arab groups might have emigrated to the region in very early times. As is well known, there was an extensive and strong Arab presence in the first century B.C. in Mesopotamia and in northern Syria<sup>4</sup> when Pompey appeared on the scene of Near Eastern history and made his Settlement in 63 B.C. Even long before Pompey, Arab groups had wandered into Mesopotamia and indeed gave their name to the region "Arabia" in Mesopotamia, known to Xenophon. So it is not impossible that some Arab group had wandered into that region of Arabissos in very early times, long

<sup>303</sup> See Kaegi's review of Whitby's *The Emperor Maurice*, p. 782.

<sup>1</sup> See *BAFIC*, 272–78, 327–28.

<sup>2</sup> See his review in *JÖBG* 41 (1990), 326–29. I should like to thank Dr. Belke for his balanced review and useful suggestions.

<sup>3</sup> *BAFIC*, 275 note 199.

<sup>4</sup> See the present writer in *RA*, 3–5, 7.

before the attestation of the town in the *Itinerarium Antoninianum*, and thus gave their name to the settlement that grew to become Arabissos.

The etymology of Arabissos and the possibility of an Arab component among its inhabitants are of some interest to Anatolian toponymy and historical geography. But it is also relevant to this chapter on the reign of Maurice who, according to Evagrius, was a Roman born in Arabissos. It is conceivable that in his early life he had some unpleasant brushes with the Arabs of the town, and that this was an element, however remote, in his antipathy toward Mundir and the Arabs. In much the same way, Procopius may have had the same experience in Caesarea, which, too, according to one Arab source, had an Arab component in its population. This might explain the antipathy of Procopius toward Arethas, Mundir's father, and his Arabs. Childhood scenes and memories linger, and it is just possible that they remained alive in the consciousness of both Procopius and Maurice and could then be one of the many keys to understanding the extraordinary antipathies of these two sixth-century Byzantines toward the Arabs and their leaders, Arethas and Mundir.

## APPENDIX II

### On the Stirrup

In two articles<sup>1</sup> that appeared since the publication of Lynn White's *Medieval Technology and Social Change*, Bernard Bachrach has discussed the stirrup in reply to Lynn White's views, examined earlier in this chapter on Maurice.<sup>2</sup> The two articles, especially the second one, have much relevance to BASIC I and II since they discuss the stirrup, although Western Europe is the concern of their author.

The first article, "Charles Martel," has a bibliography on those who challenged Lynn White's views and those who have accepted them.<sup>3</sup> It also has two useful passages on the terms in Latin, Old High German, and Anglo-Saxon used to denote the stirrup and related matters. All these terms confirm the view expressed earlier in this chapter that the initial function of the stirrup was not to provide "anchorage" but to help the rider mount his horse. Indeed, the two Latin terms he cites which express mounting and dismounting, *ascendere* and *descendere*,<sup>4</sup> are the exact equivalents of the Arabic ones, *rakiba* and *nazala*. A passage he cites from a medieval author of a military manual in the second article ("Animals and Warfare") could confirm Caliph Omar's recommendation to Muslim warriors, namely, jumping on their horses rather than mounting them through their stirrups.<sup>5</sup> It reads as follows:

Wooden horses are placed during the winter under a roof and in summer in a field. The recruits at first try to mount unarmed, then they mount carrying shields and swords, and finally with very large pole weapons. And this practice

<sup>1</sup> See B. Bachrach, "Charles Martel, Mounted Shock Combat, the Stirrup, and Feudalism," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 7 (1970), 49–75; idem, "Animals and Warfare in Early Medieval Europe," in *L'Uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 31 (Spoleto, 1985), 707–64.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 568 and note 134; p. 572 and note 151.

<sup>3</sup> See "Charles Martel," 50 note 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 58–59.

<sup>5</sup> See above, 576–77.

was so thorough that they were forced to learn how to jump on and off their horses not only from the right but from the left and from the rear and in addition they learned to jump on and off their horses even with an unsheathed sword.<sup>6</sup>

The second article is more relevant. Like the first, its main concern is Western Europe, and it reiterates the position taken in the earlier article on the relative unimportance of cavalry compared to the infantry in Western European warfare and of the stirrup in making possible the mounted shock combat of heavily armed cavalry. It also dates the introduction of the stirrup to Western Europe around A.D. 700.

The discussants of his paper, T. G. Kolias and O. Kresten, brought up the question of the stirrup in Byzantium and drew attention to the Byzantine military manuals, the *Stratēgikon* and the *Taktika* of Leo, the second discussant repeating the concern of the first about Bachrach's neglect of the Byzantine sources.<sup>7</sup> In his reply Bachrach made two points: the possibility that the two passages in the *Stratēgikon* might be interpolations and the curious fact that in the section on the Avars, the people from whom the Byzantines are said to have borrowed the stirrup, there is no mention of their stirrups.<sup>8</sup>

The possibility that the two passages in the *Stratēgikon* on the stirrup may be interpolations cannot be accepted. No editor of the text has suspected this, and the possibility must be ruled out.<sup>9</sup> The second point is more important and has been raised earlier in this chapter.<sup>10</sup> But in addition, it may be said that the bloody relations that obtained between the Byzantines and the Avars in this very period, the reign of Maurice and later, culminating in the siege of Constantinople in 626, may have disinclined the patriotic writer of the *Stratēgikon* to acknowledge that the Byzantines borrowed the stirrup from the hateful Avars, whom the Byzantines must have looked down upon as low-grade barbarians, unlike the Germans who were assimilated and who provided the empire with its many *magistri militum*.<sup>11</sup>

The question of whence the Byzantines borrowed the stirrup may be problematic, but the fact remains that they had it around A.D. 600, a fact witnessed to without doubt by the *Stratēgikon*. This is the point that is relevant to the Arab dimension of the problem of the stirrup, its diffusion in the Near East and its employment by the Arabs during the Muslim Conquests. In this chain of transmission, only the Ghassānids could have mediated it to their fellow Arabs in the Peninsula, and to the Ḥijāz in particular.

<sup>6</sup> See "Animals and Warfare," 733. It comes from Rabanus Maurus in his abridgement of Vegetius' *De Re Militari*, a training manual he prepared for King Lothair around 856.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 753–57.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 759–64.

<sup>9</sup> See above, 573.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* and note 154.

<sup>11</sup> D. A. Bullough, whom Bachrach cites ("Animals and Warfare," 739 note 103), is a dissenter from the views of Lynn White, but does accept the Avaric provenance of the stirrup; see his "Charlemagne and His Achievement in the Light of Recent Scholarship," *English Historical Review* 85 (1970), 59–105; on the Avars, see *ibid.*, 88 note 1. The Byzantine dimension of this problem involving the *Stratēgikon* does not much affect Bachrach's position, since his concern is Western Europe, not Byzantium or the Arabs.

## APPENDIX III

## The Ghassānids in Recent Scholarship

In an article published recently, Michael Whitby revived the charge of *prodosia* leveled against the Ghassānid Mundir and his father, Arethas (more against the son than the father), discussed the Arabs in the peace treaty of 561 and the Lakhmids in Menander's account, and then drew some general conclusions on the Arabs and their importance in the late sixth and seventh centuries. All this appears in the last section of his article, "The Pre-Islamic Arabs in Greek Historiography."<sup>1</sup>

The various problems that this section in his article deals with have already been treated in detail in this volume, and it would be intolerably repetitious if these problems were reexamined here. However, I should like to single out three items in his presentation and comment on them.

1. There are two sentences that appear to be a misrepresentation of what was said in the 1950s by the present writer. Speaking of Arethas and his alleged *prodosia*, Whitby ascribes to me "the conviction that faithlessness is impossible in a Christian Arab" and "that it would be incredible for an Arab king to be faithless."<sup>2</sup> These two statements are to be found nowhere in my writings on this subject; no general statements were made about Christian Arabs or Arab kings in connection with faithlessness or its opposite. The argument concerned a particular Arab Christian king, Arethas: he was a pious and zealous Christian who thus looked up to Byzantium as the Christian empire that was the protector of his faith, and so he would not have betrayed it in favor of a fire-worshiping empire, while the extraordinary *Basileia* conferred on him by Justinian in 529 left in him no desire to seek greener pastures elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> The two articles in which Arethas' alleged *prodosia* was discussed are unusually long and complex,<sup>4</sup> and it is not surprising that Whitby drew from them some erroneous conclusions on what was said.

2. Toward the end of the section on the pre-Islamic Arabs, there are two paragraphs that contain a number of erroneous statements that mar the otherwise excellent article, "Greek Historical Writing." The errors involve matters of fact, not opinion, and are listed and corrected below.

<sup>1</sup> For the article, see Michael Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, I: Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and L. Conrad (Princeton, 1992), 25–80; for the last section, see *ibid.*, 74–80.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–77 and p. 77 note 203.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian may be accused of saying that Ptolemy's account of Alexander, coming from a king, must be adjudged reliable! See *Anabasis*, trans. P. A. Brunt (London-Cambridge, Mass., 1976), vol. I, Book I.2.

<sup>4</sup> The same may be said concerning his remark in *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian*, 279 note 6, where he refers to my analysis of a passage in George of Pisidia: "George's reference to Scipio has been needlessly challenged." The argument in the article in question was very complex, and I was not trying to downgrade Scipio but to find out what Pisides *said* and *meant* after J. B. Bury had misread and mistranslated the passage. Whitby's interpretation of the passage had been voiced by others, and in Appendix B of the article I presented arguments for its rejection; see "Heraclius Πιστὸς ἐν Χριστῷ Βασιλεύς," *DOP* 34–35 (1982), 225–37.



a. The Ghassānid phylarchate was not dissolved and done away with beyond recall. It was restored, according to a precious passage in a document preserved by Michael the Syrian.

b. With the exception of the five-year period when the Ghassānid phylarchate was suspended, neither the Ghassānids nor the other Arab tribal groups became a liability. The federates remained a force in the military annals of Byzantium and did not lose their importance as a contingent in the Byzantine army of Oriens.

c. The silence of the *Stratēgikon* on the Arabs is not a reflection of their unimportance. Its silence is actually eloquent of significant facts concerning the system of *phylarchoi* and *symmachoi*.

d. The Arabs were not marginalized after the peace with Persia in 591 any more than other ethnic groups in the Byzantine army. The peace that prevailed for a few years naturally gave every ethnic contingent a less active role. The Arabs remained active in theaters of war that did not involve Persia, such as Ḥijāz in Arabia, where the Ghassānids conducted important military operations.

e. Patriarch Gregory did not convert the Lakhmid Arabs. These were converted not to the Chalcedonian Christianity of Gregory but to Nestorianism by the prelates of that confession in Sasanid Persia. The conversion of the Lakhmid king Nu'mān is a well-known episode in which Gregory had no share whatsoever.

f. Chosroes' quarrel with Nu'mān had nothing to do with his conversion to Christianity,<sup>5</sup> and again it is a celebrated episode in Arabic literary histories. Nor can his arrest be construed as a reflection of "the irrelevance of the Arabs."<sup>6</sup>

g. The Ghassānids did participate in the defense of Oriens against the advancing Persian armies in the second decade of the seventh century, but naturally lost when they fought against such heavy odds.

h. Only one of Heraclius' letters to the Senate, dispatched during the victorious counteroffensive, has survived. It is quite likely that the Arabs were mentioned in the lost letters; hence the sole reference to them in the only extant letter does not argue for their unimportance in that offensive.

3. Whitby's general conclusion reads as follows: "The lack of detailed information in Greek historians about the Arab affairs in the late sixth and seventh centuries reflects their lack of importance in contemporary wars and diplomacy." This general statement calls for the following comments. It is noteworthy that Whitby speaks only of the late sixth century and presumably the *early* seventh. The implication is that they did not lack importance in war and diplomacy in the earlier part of the sixth century. As to their lack of importance in the later part, the extremely active role of the Ghassānids under Muḍir in the 570s in both war and diplomacy contradicts what

<sup>5</sup> In a most important medieval manuscript on pre-Islamic Arabia, Chosroes, who was favorably disposed to Christianity in this period, actually encourages Nu'mān to adopt it; see Abū al-Baqā' al-Ḥillī, *al-Manāqib al-Mazyadiyya*, 2 vols., ed. S. Daradika and A. Khuraysāt (Amman, 1984), I, 267.

<sup>6</sup> Far from reflecting "the irrelevance of the Arabs" in Persia's scheme of things, the arrest of Nu'mān is considered a gross mistake in judgment on the part of Chosroes; the elimination of the Lakhmid Arabs contributed much to the success of Muslim arms against Sasanid Persia. Lakhmid-Sasanid relations may be found in Nöldeke's German translation of Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*.

Whitby says. The suspension of the Ghassānid phylarchate by Maurice did not last more than five years. Its restoration by Maurice himself testifies to the fact that the central government decided it could not control the world of the pastoralists in Arabia nor the Oriental *limes* without the Ghassānids, who return and appear in full control with their army deployed along the Euphrates facing the Persians. Soon after, the peace with Persia naturally reduced their military activity along the Persian front, but they continued their military operations in the Arabian Ḥijāz, in the last decade of the sixth century and the first decade of the seventh in what might be termed "the unknown war." There is no doubt that they fought hard in the first decade of Heraclius' reign against the advancing Persian armies in Oriens, as they must have done in the reign of Phocas; and if more than one of the military bulletins dispatched by Heraclius to Constantinople had survived, the role of the Ghassānids might have been better documented. Their place in diplomacy in this very period, the late sixth and the early seventh centuries, is attested not only in the Byzantine Orient but also in the Occident, involving the exarch of Africa and the Roman pontiff, Pope Gregory the Great.

It is not surprising that the Greek historians have little or nothing to offer on the Ghassānids in this period. Procopius, with his well-known prejudice against the Ghassānids and the Arabs, dominated their historiography. Agathias, Menander, Evagrius, and Theophylact were all pupils and admirers of his, and they all followed his lead. Procopius, in fact, set the tone for all subsequent Greek historiography in the century as far as the Arabs were concerned, and he was the one who created the image of the faithless Arab, which haunted the writings of all these historians. Whitby himself gives a vivid account of their dependence on Procopius in the earlier part of his article.<sup>7</sup> In parroting Procopius they reflected their indifference to Arab federate activities and so deprived the student of this period of valuable historical data.

The amount of data lost in this process may be appreciated when the rich material on Mundīr for the ten years or so recounted in the *HE* of John of Ephesus is compared to what the Greek historians say—a sentence or two that denounce him as a traitor, and complete silence on the crucial role he played in the Monophysite movement when he appeared as its central secular figure in both Oriens and Egypt. John of Ephesus' work has not survived in its entirety but only in part. One can imagine the wealth of data on the Ghassānids that he must have included when he discussed the period that spanned the reign of Arethas, which lasted not a decade, as did that of his son Mundīr, but four decades of active service for Byzantium and the Monophysite church. These would have indicated in no uncertain terms the importance of the Ghassānids in the history of Arab-Byzantine relations, especially in the central reign of the century, that of Justinian. John was an ecclesiastical historian, and yet he was so impressed by the role and importance of the Ghassānids that in addition to the

<sup>7</sup> See Whitby, "Greek Historical Writing," 25–26; however, he withdrew Theophylact from the group of admirers. But it is possible that as far as Arab *prodosia* was concerned, he did follow Procopius; for other sources from which he could imbibe anti-Arab sentiments, see above, 595–96.

many and detailed references to them in his work, he devoted an entire chapter exclusively to their rise and fall, which unfortunately is no longer extant. Other non-Greek sources, such as contemporary Arabic poetry, have preserved important data on the Ghassānids in this period, completely unknown to the Greek sources.

The *Stratēgikon* must have inclined students of this period to think of the Arab *foederati* along the same lines that Whitby has suggested, and must have confirmed the impression that the Greek sources of this period convey. The work is completely silent on the Arabs, but this silence was a tribute to the success of the system of *phylarchoi* and *symmachoi* in Oriens, which was perfected in the sixth century and through which Byzantium controlled the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula. It was also a tribute to the successful Byzantine diplomatic offensives that neutralized a potentially dangerous Peninsula into a Byzantine sphere of influence in the Orient. Two federates of Byzantium controlled most of its tribes, Kinda in central Arabia and Ghassān in Hījāz, while South Arabia was ruled until about 570 by a friendly Christian dynasty. Hence the Arabs of that Peninsula constituted no danger for Byzantium, as did the barbarians across the Danube and Rhine, to which the *Stratēgikon* naturally devoted most of its *ethnika*.

It is not difficult to see how Whitby reached his conclusion on the Arabs, neglecting or dismissing the non-Greek sources which had more detailed accounts. Furthermore, in his dependence on the Greek sources he took into account neither the perspective from which these were written nor their attitude toward the Arabs. He also started from the end, from the last historian of this period, Theophylact, who wrote a history devoted to the reign of Maurice, the archenemy of the Ghassānids. Then he proceeded backwards, to Evagrius, Menander, and Agathias, until he reached Procopius who started the tradition of Arab *prodosia* and who controlled the subsequent historical writings of his successors. The result was the picture Whitby drew of the Arabs and their role in his recent article. It is surprising that he disregarded what two giants in the field had said on this subject, an Orientalist and a Byzantinist who discerned the prejudice that ran through the Greek authors on the one hand and understood the value of the Arabic and Syriac sources as a corrective on the other. The combined efforts of Nöldeke and Stein offered the fairest and most objective account of the Ghassānids in this period. We are in an age of specialization, and those who have no specific knowledge of Arabic, Syriac, *Arabica*, and *Syriaca* should not hesitate to avail themselves of the research of colleagues in these Oriental languages when they bear on their own, as happened in the case of Stein and Nöldeke.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> It was in this spirit that the editors of the volume in which Whitby's article appeared expressed themselves in the introduction; see *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, 4–5. There is not a single reference in Whitby's section "The Pre-Islamic Arabs" to Nöldeke's classic on the Ghassānids, the monograph that brilliantly assessed the two sets of sources on the Ghassānids, the Greek and the Oriental, nor is it used in his other book, *The Emperor Maurice*.

In this connection, it may be mentioned that what appears as "Sadasadasch" in Whitby's *Chronicon Paschale*, p. 188, is the Persian title "Shāhānshāh," "King of Kings," to which I drew attention in "The Iranian Factor in Byzantium during the Reign of Heraclius," *DOP* 26 (1972), 297 note 12.

The three volumes of the second part of this trilogy on Byzantium and the Arabs have treated the role of the Arabs in Oriens in this proto-Byzantine period, or late antiquity from Constantine to Heraclius. In the process of studying the Greek sources from Ammianus to Theophylact, the *ira et studium*, whenever it existed in the work of each of the historians of these three centuries, have been examined. These studies reveal facets of these historians that should be taken into account in forming general judgments on them. The strand of continuity in this late antique historiography is discernible in the image of the Arabs, and it is most clear in the four historians of the sixth and early seventh centuries, who might be described as the School of Procopius. *A propos* of him, the present writer suffers from no lack of admiration in spite of some of his articles that present Procopius in an unattractive light because of the prejudice that infects his work. Before the three articles on his *ira et studium* appeared in *BZ*, the present writer had extolled his virtues as a source for the history of the Ghassānids: "The primary and principal source for the study of the Ghassānid Dynasty during the reign of its first and most illustrious ruler, Arethas, son of Jabalah, is undoubtedly the *History* of Procopius of Caesarea. . . . In the view of the aridity of profane Byzantine literature on the Ghassānids during the reign of Arethas, the *History* of Procopius of Caesarea is a veritable oasis."<sup>9</sup>

The foregoing paragraphs should not in the least detract from the value of Whitby's "Greek Historical Writing." The last section, "The Pre-Islamic Arabs in Greek Historiography," which has been examined in this Appendix, may be left out without any loss to the main article, to which it is not related organically. The article is an important contribution to the study of sixth-century historiography and a worthy sequel to his substantial studies on Theophylact, Maurice, and the *Chronicon Paschale*.

<sup>9</sup> See "Procopius on the Ghassānids," *JAOS* 77 (1957), 79, 87.

## VII

### The Reign of Phocas (602–610)

The eight years of the reign of Phocas witnessed an amelioration in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations. Immediately after the fall of Maurice, Phocas released Mundir from his exile in Sicily and the Ghassānid king returned home, thus opening a new phase in these relations. The same reign witnessed the outbreak of the Persian war, which gives the reign its crucial importance in the formulation of the final judgment on how the catastrophic war with Persia came about. As Byzantium's *foederati* in Oriens, the Ghassānids naturally took part in the war which broke out after a lull that had obtained since 591 in the reign of Maurice. The Byzantine sources<sup>1</sup> are silent on the Ghassānids, but the Oriental sources, both Syriac and Arabic, are not, and so it is to these that one must turn for the study of Ghassānid history during this reign. The Syriac source is a late one, but it derives from earlier reliable documents, while the Arabic source is contemporary pre-Islamic poetry.

#### I. THE RETURN OF MUNDIR FROM EXILE, 602

The silence of the Byzantine sources on the Ghassānids is broken for the year 602 by the Syriac *Chronicle*. In a passage that describes the murder of Maurice in November of that year, the chronicler concludes with a sentence on Mundir, to the effect that he was released from his exile and so departed to his country. In the Latin version the sentence reads: "ab exilio dimissus est etiam Mundarus, rex Arabum, et abiit in regionem suam."<sup>2</sup>

The information of the Syriac author is precious, and there is no doubt about its authenticity. Two years before, in A.D. 600, one of the letters of Pope Gregory discussed Mundir's exile and the effort of the pope to set him

<sup>1</sup> The reign of Phocas has been neglected until very recently when David Olster devoted his doctoral dissertation to it. I should like to thank him for letting me read his chapter on the Persian war, in which the sources for the reign, both Byzantine and Oriental, are carefully sifted; see "The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: The Reign of Phocas," Ph.D. diss. (University of Chicago, 1986), 152–83. See also Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, I, 40–89.

<sup>2</sup> See *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ser. 3, vol. 14 (Louvain, 1937), trans. J. B. Chabot, versio, p. 172, lines 22–24.

free.<sup>3</sup> The statement in the Syriac source would have been startling without this intelligence from the pope's letter, since nothing had been heard about Mundir for the last eighteen years after his exile in 582. Thus with the pope's letter as a background, the statement in the Syriac *Chronicle* indubitably confirms Mundir's release and raises some questions.

1. The causal sequence that obtains between the murder of Maurice, the accession of a new emperor, and the release of Mundir is clearly reflected in the sequence of sentences in that paragraph which describes the fall and murder of Maurice. The inclusion in the paragraph of the last sentence on Mundir's release can only be viewed in this light, supported by the use of the adverb *dēn* in Syriac, which here expresses sequence and consequence: "One consequence of this was that al-Mundhir, the king of the Arabs, was released."<sup>4</sup>

2. One might think that the pope, after the failure of his efforts with Maurice to have Mundir released, would have repeated those efforts after the emperor's death, but chronological difficulties militate against this.<sup>5</sup> Maurice was murdered in late November, and news of the accession of Phocas did not reach Rome until early next year when the pope sent two letters to the new emperor, dated May and July 603.

3. The most natural explanation is that the Ghassānids themselves, his brothers and sons, immediately approached the central government for the release of their father, which they had unsuccessfully attempted only two years earlier. As their efforts were unsuccessful, because of Maurice's denial of their plea, they must have hastened to renew these efforts once the death of Maurice was announced, especially as the death was not a natural one that was followed by the accession of his son or relative but a violent one committed by a rebellious soldier and an enemy of the previous regime. The Ghassānids may have engaged in enlisting the good offices of the pope or even of Heraclius, who was then exarch of Africa, but apparently that was unnecessary, in view of the fact that Phocas' accession was the result of a *coup* against Maurice. The new emperor must have been casting about for friends and supporters, and so he would have been only too pleased to oblige the Ghassānids by releasing their father and in so doing range them on his side.

4. Thus Mundir returned home after an exile that lasted for twenty years, the entire reign of Maurice. Only a violent death could release him, evidence of the rancor that the emperor must have harbored against him. The

<sup>3</sup> See above, 602–5.

<sup>4</sup> See "In the Shadow of the Moon," p. 93. I am grateful to Dr. Andrew Palmer for sending me a pre-publication copy of his manuscript. For Syriac "*dēn*," see *Chronicon Anonymum*, textus, p. 219, line 10.

<sup>5</sup> On the letters of Pope Gregory to Phocas, see below, 621–22.



statement in the Syriac *Chronicle* is cryptic and laconic; absolutely nothing else is known about Mundir's return other than the bald statement that expresses the fact. Whether Sergius and Mundir's wife, two sons, and daughter who had accompanied him into exile in 582 were still alive in 602 is not clear,<sup>6</sup> nor are Mundir's whereabouts after his return to his homeland. There are excellent contemporary Arabic sources for this period, namely, pre-Islamic poetry, but they are silent on Mundir. The presumption then is that on his return he did not lead an active military life.<sup>7</sup> He must have been an old man by the year 602. Besides, after twenty years of absence from Oriens and the military scene, a new Ghassānid phylarchate had come into existence after the restoration of Ghassānid-Byzantine relations in the late 580s, and this had lasted for many years by the time he returned. Thus he must have faded out of the military picture and could possibly have done what the religious Salīhid king, Dāwūd, had done—renounce an active, military life and lead a religious one.<sup>8</sup> He could have died shortly after his return;<sup>9</sup> hence the silence concerning him of the Arabic poetry composed for the Ghassānids. Thus ended in obscurity the career of a distinguished Ghassānid soldier who served with great distinction in the Persian wars, then fell from grace and was exiled for twenty years; but before his death early in the seventh century, he had been known to the Roman Occident, through the *Chronicle* of John of Biclar, the dispatches of Innocentius, the praetorian prefect of Africa, and the letters of Pope Gregory.

A word must be said on the Ghassānid reaction to the fall of Maurice which made possible the return of Mundir. The Byzantine sources, which are silent on the Ghassānids, naturally do not mention such a matter of detail. But their reaction may easily be surmised from their devotion to their father, their rebellion in order to release him, and his son Nu'mān's gambling with his own life when he, outlaw that he was, fearlessly traveled to Constantinople to plead with Maurice to set him free. One of their poets spoke of the hope for the return of the Ghassānid Nu'mān from captivity in one of his poems, with expressions of joy and rejoicing in that eventuality.<sup>10</sup> It is, therefore, not difficult to imagine the sentiments of the Ghassānids in 602 on the return of the great warrior for whose sake and for the release of whom they had endured so much in the early 580s.

<sup>6</sup> On this see above, 461, 485.

<sup>7</sup> His son or sons who returned with him could have functioned as phylarchs on their return.

<sup>8</sup> On Dāwūd see *BAFIC*, 257–62, esp. 262.

<sup>9</sup> Twenty years of exile in a new climate that may not have suited him may have affected his health, as exile in Constantinople for a shorter period may have affected the health of his son Nu'mān; on this see above, 564, 567.

<sup>10</sup> For the Arabic "naḫḫa wa nabitaḥij," "we will rejoice and be jubilant," see above, 565 and *BASIC* II.

Fortunately, contemporary documents on the fall of Maurice and the accession of Phocas could give some idea of what the Ghassānids and their poets must have felt on the release of their king. They come from the pen of Pope Gregory the Great, who had endured so much from Maurice's obtuse policy toward the Lombards against whom the pope had striven so hard to protect Italy. Thus the Ghassānids shared with the pope a disappointment in Maurice and his policies toward them, and what was expressed in Rome must have been similar to what was expressed in Ghassānland and by members of the Ghassānid phylarchate. The representatives of the two establishments, Pope Gregory and King Mundir, had been targeted by Maurice and pejoratively referred to as *fatuus*<sup>11</sup> and *prodōtēs* respectively. The pope expressed himself in very strong terms that verged on adulation toward the new emperor. But this should certainly not be construed so much as admiration for Phocas, whom the pope could not at the time of his accession judge and who turned out to be an ugly tyrant, as expressions of justified dissatisfaction with Maurice. Thus they may be added to the judgments passed on Maurice by other contemporaries.<sup>12</sup>

Of these Gregorian documents, the following may be mentioned. (1) When the image of the new imperial couple arrived in Rome, they were acclaimed as follows: "Exaudi Christe! Focae Augusto et Leontiae Augustae vita!" And then the pope ordered the image to be placed in the Oratory of St. Caesarius.<sup>13</sup> (2) The pope addressed two letters to Phocas in May and July 603, and the first was the more important one. The true sentiments of the pope and others who suffered from Maurice are expressed in this letter. The pope not only congratulated him in conventional terms but rejoiced in the new accession and cited biblical texts lauding his Lord for changing times and transferring kingdoms: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo, qui iuxta quod scriptum est mutat tempora et transfert regna et qui hoc cunctis innotuit quod per prophetam suum loqui dignatus est dicens quia dominatur excelsus in regno hominum et cui uoluerit ipse dat illud.*"<sup>14</sup> The pope also expressed confidence that the afflicted would fare better under the new ruler: "*Laetentur caeli et exsultet terra et de benignis uestris actibus uniuersae reipublicae populus nunc usque uehementer afflictus hilarescat.*"<sup>15</sup>

Notable in this second quotation is the use of the word "*afflictus*," which Gregory had used in the plural in his letter to Maurice interceding on behalf

<sup>11</sup> On Maurice's application of this term to the pope, see *S. Gregorii Magni Opera: Registrum Epistularum*, 2 vols., ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140–140A, Book V, 36, vol. I, p. 304, line 3.

<sup>12</sup> To which may be added Gregory's letter to Maurice; for the judgment of another contemporary, the historian Theophylact, on Phocas, see Tinnfeld, *Kategorien*, 50–52.

<sup>13</sup> See *S. Gregorii Magni Opera: Registrum Epistularum*, II, p. 1101.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1033, lines 2–5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 16–18.

of Mundir. He may also have had Mundir in mind when he expressed a hope further on in the same letter that personal liberty might be restored to every single person: "Reformetur iam singulis sub iugo pii imperii libertas sua."<sup>16</sup> The letter was written after the release of Mundir, but Gregory, of course, must have heard of the release of the king for whom he had interceded three years earlier. The mood of jubilation in Ghassānland must have rivaled that in Rome, especially when news of Mundir's release became known and later when he actually returned. The Ghassānids had even more reason to rejoice than the pope since they had suffered personally in every way from Maurice's hostility to the *foederati* in general and to them in particular.

Phocas may have released Mundir out of spite toward his murdered predecessor and in so doing he could count on the loyalty of the Ghassānids. Thus his reign opens a new chapter in Ghassānid-Byzantine relations, when harmony prevailed between lord and vassal after a stormy confrontation that had obtained during the reign of Maurice, even going back to the early 570s in the reign of Justin II. Phocas was to reap the rewards of his pro-Ghassānid policy since the Persian war erupted soon after his accession and the Ghassānids were naturally called upon to participate in it, which, according to contemporary Arabic poetry, they did with great gusto.

## II. THE PERSIAN WAR

The outbreak of the Persian war during the reign of Phocas must have involved the Ghassānids, the *foederati* of Byzantium in Oriens. The Greek sources for this war are silent on them with the exception of one, but this is the nature of the sources for this reign. They are confused and not very informative on the main course of the war, and, as has been noted by its most recent investigator, they are mainly concerned with events in the capital and so neglect the provinces.<sup>17</sup> It is safe to assume, however, that the Ghassānids participated eagerly in this war for various reasons.

Their relations with the central government had improved considerably with the accession of Phocas, who both dispatched their archenemy Maurice and returned their father and king, Mundir, from exile. Thus their participation in the campaigns of the imperial army was not merely technical and listless, as it might have been when they fought under an emperor such as Maurice who had treated them badly. So gratitude to the new emperor must have been an element in their participation. Furthermore, the tone of the Persian offensive—revenge for the murder of Maurice—would only have enhanced their readiness to fight the Persians,<sup>18</sup> in addition to the fact that now

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 1034, lines 26–27.

<sup>17</sup> See Olster, *Reign of Phocas*, 152.

<sup>18</sup> Especially as the son of their enemy, Maurice, real or fictitious, was fighting with the Persians to avenge the death of his father. On whether Theodosius was murdered with his

their inveterate enemies the Lakhmids, Persia's Arab allies, had fallen from grace after the Lakhmid king Nu'mān was murdered by Chosroes,<sup>19</sup> even as their own king Mundir returned from exile. As the course of the Persian war in the sixth century showed, the *foederati* of the two empires often fought, not as *foederati* in the Persian-Byzantine conflict, but as Arab tribal groups, thus converting their conflict into a bitter Lakhmid-Ghassānid war. The fact that hostilities between the allies of the two empires had flared up around the year 600, some two years before the accession of Phocas,<sup>20</sup> would only have whetted their appetite for the resumption of the conflict.

The Persian war of Phocas' reign was fought mainly in Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Anatolia,<sup>21</sup> but Syria was also involved in 609. As happened in previous campaigns of the army of the Orient against Persia, the Ghassānids participated even when the campaign was conducted in the north in Mesopotamia and Armenia; but they would have been directly involved when it approached the middle Euphrates and Syria as in 609 when, by the end of the year or the beginning of 610, the Persians were in possession of Byzantine Armenia, Mesopotamia, and a small part of Syria.<sup>22</sup> The course of the war as well as its chronology can only be hypothetically reconstructed in view of the state of the sources. But the large facts emerge: it was a serious war that resulted in substantial losses of Byzantine territory, and it lasted for the better part of the reign, starting in 604.

The Ghassānids' share in this war is luckily preserved in contemporary Arabic poetry, which is specific in its details except for the precise dating of this participation. In view of the paucity of the sources on this war and their unreliability, this piece of evidence from the incontestable Arabic is welcome. It is unfortunate that the rest of the poetry that must have been composed has not survived, but what has is valuable and complements what has survived on the campaigns of the Ghassānids in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>23</sup>

This contemporary Arabic poetry consists of one or possibly two poems composed by the two pre-Islamic poets associated with the Ghassānids as their panegyrists, al-Nābigha and Ḥassān. The first, by al-Nābigha, speaks of the campaign of a Ghassānid king, al-Nu'mān, into Persian territory, specifically Iraq (Babylonia), most probably the area of Lakhmid settlement, and has been discussed earlier in this volume. Its precise dating is difficult; it could refer to

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father, Maurice, and other brothers, it may be mentioned that his name appears in the list of the murdered household of Maurice that reached Rome and Pope Gregory early in 603; see *S. Gregorii Magni: Registrum Epistularum*, II, p. 1101, line 6.

<sup>19</sup> This took place around 602. The reign of the formidable Lakhmid Nu'mān had lasted for some twenty years. On his death, see Rothstein, *DLH*, 114–20.

<sup>20</sup> See above, 561.

<sup>21</sup> For the Persian war of Phocas' reign, see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 57–68.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 66.

<sup>23</sup> On this, see below, 624–26.

a campaign early in the reign of Phocas or to the inter-Arab war around A.D. 600 recorded by Theophylact. If the former, it could be considered a federate campaign in the Persian war of Phocas' reign and may thus be added to the list of operations. But there is no way of assigning it definitely to this war. Besides, the reference is slight, consisting of only one verse.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to this verse, there is a longish poem by Ḥassān,<sup>25</sup> which is detailed and specific. Since it is the only surviving record of the Ghassānid participation in the Persian war of Phocas' reign, it deserves a detailed analysis for the extraction of valuable data. It attracted the attention of Nöldeke, who gave only a very brief account of it.<sup>26</sup>

The Ghassānid share in this poem consists of eight verses, possibly ten. As observed by Nöldeke, it was composed before Ḥassān became the poet-laureate of the Prophet Muḥammad after the latter emigrated to Medina<sup>27</sup> in 622. More precise dating is certainly possible and assigns it to the reign of Phocas. The second decade of the seventh century is out of the question since the reference to the Ghassānid invasion of Persian territory in the poem is inconsistent with the fact that the Persian advance into Oriens in the reign of Heraclius in that decade was so overwhelmingly victorious that a Ghassānid penetration of Persia is inconceivable. The second half of Maurice's reign is also ruled out, since peace reigned between the two powers and the disturbance of A.D. 600 could not have involved the responsible Ghassānids. By the process of elimination, the reign of Phocas is the period to which this poem refers. The following data may be extracted from it on the state of the Ghassānid phylarchate during the reign of Phocas.

The names of the two Ghassānid commanders are given, 'Amr and Ḥujr, who thus may be added to the Ghassānid phylarchal onomasticon in the first decade of the seventh century. How they are related to other Ghassānids mentioned in the poems of al-Nābigha is not clear.<sup>28</sup> Striking in the poem is the

<sup>24</sup> The crucial verse in this poem was discussed in the section on the reign of Muḍir. The relevant word in the verse is not certain and has been read as *al-bilād*, instead of *al-'Irāq*. If correct, the verse would become irrelevant to the Persian war. The word may very well be *al-bilād* since the poem is almost entirely on a campaign in Ḥijāz.

<sup>25</sup> The poem may be consulted in the new edition of Ḥassān's poetry, *Dīwān of Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, ed. W. N. 'Arafāt, Gibb Memorial Series (London, 1971), I, 307-9. The relevant verses, 8-15 and possibly 9-17, may be found on p. 308.

<sup>26</sup> Nöldeke, *GF*, 40-41.

<sup>27</sup> It was probably composed in the second decade of the 7th century, shortly after the Persian occupation of Oriens, which culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in 614. As the relevant verses on the Ghassānids are in the nature of an elegy, the presumption is that the two Ghassānids died later fighting the Persians in Oriens. So the *termini* of its composition could be narrowed to the period between 614 and 622, when Muḥammad emigrated to Medina.

<sup>28</sup> Nöldeke (*GF*, 40) suggested that Ḥujr is the son of that Nu'mān on whom Nābigha composed an elegy, since he is called in the poem Abū Ḥujr, while the other, 'Amr, is the famous 'Amr, the recipient of Nābigha's most splendid and celebrated panegyric on the Ghassānids.



use of the dual throughout, in the verbs that describe the commanders' activities, which suggests some form of dyarchy in the Ghassānid phylarchate, bringing to mind that of Arethas and Abū Karib, the two brothers in the reign of Justinian. Most likely they were two phylarchs who had two different federate jurisdictions, but who campaigned together, uniting their forces in military operations.<sup>29</sup>

Their phylarchal jurisdiction is described as extending from the "Snow Mountain," Jabal al-Thalj<sup>30</sup> (Mount Hermon) to Ayla, or more precisely to the two sides of Ayla. Mount Hermon is in Palaestina Secunda and Ayla in Tertia, both associated with the Ghassānids. Notable is the reference to Jānibay-Ayla, the two sides of Ayla, which suggests influence or jurisdiction on both sides of the Gulf of Eilat, including Sinai (Palaestina Tertia), but apparently not Ayla itself.

The poet uses the verb *malakā*, "the two reigned" as kings over this region. If *malakā* is used with technical accuracy, meaning "reigned as king," the verb could apply to only one of them, since there was only one Ghassānid king who had the various phylarchs under him.<sup>31</sup> As will be argued later,<sup>32</sup> the chances are that Phocas restored the *Basileia* to the Ghassānids; hence *malakā* could have been used with technical accuracy, meaning "reigned as king." Ḥassān's use of the dual is then broad, since *malakā* is strictly applicable to only one of the two Ghassānids.

The poet also lauds their generosity and hospitality, which of course suggests that he was their beneficiary. The term he uses in this connection, *nadā*, is clearly generosity, while the other, *birr*, righteousness, could refer to their religious orientation, Christianity. He describes the pair as *fārisay khaylīn*, "two riders of horses," and what this phrase expresses is consonant with the fact that the principal strength of the Ghassānid contingent consisted in its cavalry. The phrase could also carry some overtones of chivalry and valor in war.

The crucial verse is the one which states that "they came to the Persians in their own abode," thus leaving no doubt that they penetrated deeply into Persian territory and not simply skirmished on the frontiers.<sup>33</sup> Thus in the

<sup>29</sup> That the phylarchate was a dyarchy has been argued by Caussin de Perceval, but rightly rejected by Nöldeke, who thought—more plausibly—that 'Amr may have been the real Ghassānid phylarch or king while Ḥujr was his commander-in-chief or general; Nöldeke, *GF*, 40.

<sup>30</sup> The picturesque phrase occurs again in the poetry of Ḥassān who, coming from Medina, must have been attracted by the sight of the snow-covered mountain. Nowadays Mount Hermon is called Jabal al-Shaykh, with reference to the white hair on the head of an old man, *shaykh*. On the second occurrence of Jabal al-Thalj, see *Dīwān*, I, 279, verse 4.

<sup>31</sup> Nöldeke (*GF*, 40) noted the difficulty and translated "sie beherrschen." He translated only three of the eight verses.

<sup>32</sup> See below, 627.

<sup>33</sup> Arabic *fi dāribimī* suggests their reaching the Persian heartland. Perhaps they reached



course of a war that was a series of humiliations and retreats for Byzantium, the Ghassānid contingent seems to have relieved this war of its record of depressing retreats. The same verse has the term *i'ṣār*, which is the better reading and which means "cyclone"; the verse could thus refer to the whirlwind campaign conducted by the Ghassānids<sup>34</sup> in the style of Muḍir in the 570s against the Persians and Lakhmids.

The same verse raises the question of the field of operations assigned to the Ghassānids. They appear rulers in the far south, and yet they are called upon to fight in the distant north. This they had done before when the phylarchate became a *Basileia* in 530. So it is possible that the Ghassānids in the reign of Phocas were principally stationed in Arabia and the two Palestines but would be drafted to fight elsewhere.<sup>35</sup>

One of the verses gives what seems to have been a Ghassānid war cry. For encouraging their soldiers, the two Ghassānids shouted "Yāla Ghassān iṣbirū": "O Ghassān, endure, stand fast!" Notable is the verb derived from the root ṢBR (endurance), repeated at the end of the verse, the ideal of the Ghassānids who were known for this martial virtue, and indeed some of them were nicknamed al-Ṣubr, a term possibly reflected in a Greek inscription.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, their weaponry is mentioned, especially the sword, described as a *ṣafīḥ*, the broad sword, the same term used in describing the Ghassānid swords wrought at Bostra.<sup>37</sup> It is lauded as broad, choice (*muṣṭafā*) and not blunted. The spears are mentioned in another verse.

Two verses that follow the eight on the Ghassānids could also belong to the Ghassānid portion of the poem, as they continue to speak of valor and repeat the word *ṣubur* (*ṣubr*) and also add the word *ghaiṭarīf*, the plural of *ghaiṭrīf*, a laudatory term often applied to the Ghassānids.<sup>38</sup>

### III. THE GHASSĀNIDS AND PHOCAS

The relations of the Ghassānids with Phocas started off well with the latter's release of their king, Muḍir, and they participated actively in the Persian

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Hīra, which could be so described, as their ancestor Muḍir had done, and this would have been a penetration that the Arabic phrase is applicable to.

<sup>34</sup> The hemistich in which this word occurs is left untranslated by Nöldeke. Apparently he had the inferior reading *i'ṣām*, instead of *i'ṣār*, which does not make sense. Now the *apparatus criticus* reveals *i'ṣār*, which makes better sense; see *Dīwān of Ḥassān ibn Thābit*, I, p. 309, no. 12.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Jafna, the phylarch of 587, whose seat was Jābiya in Palaestina Secunda, but whose military duties took him to the Euphrates region; and so apparently this was the situation after the restoration of the Ghassānids in 587: above, 554–58.

<sup>36</sup> For the Ghassānid al-Ṣubr in the Greek inscription, see *BASIC II*.

<sup>37</sup> For the Ghassānid weaponry, see *BASIC II*. *Ṣafīḥ* in the verse is a collective noun for "swords."

<sup>38</sup> On *ghaiṭrīf* see *BASIC*, 109; on al-Ghaiṭrīf al Ghassānī, see below, Appendix.

war of his reign. But those who rejoiced at the fall of Maurice and the accession of Phocas did so prematurely as the truth about Phocas quickly became known. What the relations of the Ghassānids with him were like toward the end of his reign is not recorded. It is more than likely that they soured. But before discussing this final phase of their relations with Phocas, it is well that the state of the Ghassānid phylarchate itself in this period be discussed.

### The Ghassānid Phylarchate

Since Phocas appeared as a friend of the Ghassānids at the very beginning of his reign, it is natural to ask whether the privileges that Maurice had withdrawn from the Ghassānids were returned to them with the advent of Phocas. There is no firm evidence for answering the various questions that arise in relation to this problem but they may be treated as follows.

1. Did Phocas restore the extraordinary *Basileia* that was conferred on Arethas by Justinian around 530? The last official document that describes the Ghassānid phylarch around 587, the letter of Peter of Callinicum, does not refer to Jafna as king nor as *patricius*, and the presumption is that neither title was conferred on the Ghassānids after that downgrading of their status by Maurice in the early 580s.<sup>39</sup> But the advent of Phocas could have seen a reversal of the policy of Byzantium toward the Ghassānids, and it is possible that he did just that out of spite toward his predecessor and in order to please his Arab federates and rally their support. There is an echo of the *Basileia* in the poetry of Ḥassān, who visited them and lauded them in just this period, the first decade of the seventh century. He refers to the Ghassānid chief as *Dū al-Tāj*, literally, "he of the crown." The specificity that attaches to the phrase, not just a reference to him as king (*malik*), which could have been a literary locution, suggests that the *Basileia* was conferred and with it the crown.<sup>40</sup>

2. Related to the titular question of the *Basileia* is that of the extent of the jurisdiction of the Ghassānids, whether it remained restricted to the Provincia Arabia and the two Palestines, Secunda and Tertia, or whether it was extended to other northerly provinces in Oriens reaching the Euphrates, as the power of Arethas and his son Munḍir was? The chances are that this was the case. The poem analyzed in the preceding section locates the two Ghassānid chiefs in Arabia and Palestine as their headquarters but describes them as campaigning in Persian territory during the Persian war. This, of course, does not prove but does suggest that the Ghassānids were restored to some of their past power and wide phylarchal jurisdiction extending to the Euphrates, al-

<sup>39</sup> On this see above, 563.

<sup>40</sup> The term for "kings," "*mulūk*," appears in Ḥassān's poetry, but this may not have been used with technical accuracy. But *Dū al-Tāj* is different and suggests the real thing; see the *Dīwān*, p. 255, verse 10.

ready clear from the data known about Jafna around 587, when the Ghassānid phylarch is found operating in Euphratesia near the Euphrates. Phocas could only have enhanced their power.<sup>41</sup>

3. Phocas was a spendthrift who wasted what Maurice had saved. It is possible that he extended his extravagance to the Ghassānids and paid them the *annona* in Byzantine *solidi*, always welcome among the Arabs. There is reference in the later Arabic sources to the *dinārs* (*denarii*) of Heraclius, and also to those of Phocas in Bilād al-Shām, Oriens. This was toward the end of the caliphate of Mu'āwiya (661–680). The relevant sentence is “and Fūq is the name of one of the kings of the Rūm (*Rhomaioi*) and to him are attributed the Phocian *denarii* as the Heraclian are attributed to Heraclius.”<sup>42</sup> These coins of Phocas could have circulated in Oriens in general, but the reference to them in the Arab context could suggest that they were known to the Arab dynasty that preceded the Umayyad in Bilād al-Shām. This is consonant with the spendthrift ways of Phocas and his desire to acquire allies among the Ghassānid Arabs, as he tried to do with the aristocracy and the Veneti.<sup>43</sup>

4. In addition to this “numismatic” datum for the reign, there is another from Greek epigraphy, which might be of relevance to the Arab federate presence in Oriens during the reign of Phocas. An inscription found at Anasartha and dated 604 speaks of the building activity undertaken by a certain Gregorios of noble lineage and dedicated to God, in which he engaged “par économie de sa patrie,” according to the editor.<sup>44</sup> The editor related this inscription to two others found in Anasartha,<sup>45</sup> the latter of which has the name Gregorios Abimenes and is dated 594/95. The similarities among the three inscriptions inclined the editor to think that they were set up by the same person celebrating some restoration work for the defense of the city of Anasartha toward the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh.

In his attempt to identify the dedicant, the editor suggested that he was either a local notable from Anasartha or an Arab phylarch. That he was of Arab origin is clearly reflected in his name, Abimenes, a transliteration<sup>46</sup> of

<sup>41</sup> Whether this extension included jurisdiction over non-Ghassānid federates, such as the Tanūkhids and the Salīhids, is not clear. In the poem already analyzed, the two Ghassānid chiefs address only their Ghassānid followers.

<sup>42</sup> See al-Jawālīqī, *al-Mu'arrab*, ed. A. M. Shākir (repr. Teheran, 1966), 277. The name of Phocas, distorted by Arabic diacritical marks, appears as Qūq, instead of Fūq, and the misplacement of one dot has effected the distortion. In the *apparatus criticus*, the adjective “Phocian” appears as “Qūfiyya” instead of “Fūqiyya,” a familiar metathesis in the transliteration of Arabic names into Greek. On the coinage of Phocas, see P. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection* (Washington, D.C., 1968), II.1, pp. 147–215.

<sup>43</sup> See Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 69, 71.

<sup>44</sup> See *IGLSYR*, no. 281, pp. 161–62.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 288, 292, pp. 164–65, 166–67.

<sup>46</sup> As suggested by the editor, *ibid.*, p. 167.

either Abi-Ma'n or Abi-Mānī', probably the former, the much commoner name among the Arabs. It is very doubtful that the person in question was an Arab phylarch, as the editor suggests, but it must remain a possibility. As the editor did not argue for this possibility and as phylarchal presence is hard to come by in this period and region, the possibility is attractive, and in support of it the following may be adduced.

1. This was the region that was the stamping ground of the Tanūkhids, the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium in the fourth century, who after the rise of the Salīhids in the fifth century, persisted in Oriens as federates of Byzantium and continued to be so until the Arab conquest of Oriens in the seventh century. It is, therefore, possible that Gregorios Abimēnos was one of these Tanūkhid phylarchs. It is practically certain that his name is not Ghassānid, and so if he was indeed a phylarch, the chances that he was a Tanūkhid are good.<sup>47</sup>

2. This could be supported by another inscription found outside the walls of Anasartha dated A.D. 425, which mentions an Arab woman named Mavia, who most probably was either the same as the famous queen of the fourth century or one related to her.<sup>48</sup> In any case, this Mavian inscription, which implies that Anasartha witnessed a phylarchal Arab presence in the region to which Mavia was related, could be brought forward in support of the phylarchal identity of Gregorios Abimēnos.

3. Another inscription associated with Anasartha could also be adduced. This one was found inside Anasartha, set up by a certain Silvanus, who erected a shrine at the suggestion of a child of many virtues by the name of Chasidat.<sup>49</sup> It has been argued that the Arabs and the federate phylarchal Arabs were heavily involved in this inscription, but what is most relevant in this context is the occurrence of the word *phylarchoi* in it, which attests explicitly, and not merely by implication, phylarchal presence in the region of Anasartha, and thus gives support to the editor's view that the Abimēnos in question was an Arab phylarch.

4. Finally, Gregorios Abimēnos has the honorary title of *πανεύφημος*. Ordinary phylarchs did not have that high title in the honorary ladder; they were mostly *clarissimi* (λαμπρότατοι) or *spectabiles* (περίβλεπτοι). Only the supreme phylarchs, such as Arethas and Mundīr, had the highest titles including *πανεύφημος*.<sup>50</sup> But in view of what happened to the Ghassānids in the

<sup>47</sup> For the Tanūkhids, see *BAFOC*, passim.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 222–27.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 227–38.

<sup>50</sup> On these titles and ranks applied to the Arab phylarchs, see the present writer in "The Patriciate of Arethas," *BZ* 52 (1959), 333–43. In commenting on inscription 288, the editor made a mistake in saying that Justinian in 531 conferred both *patricius* and *πανεύφημος* on Mundīr (*IGLSYR*, II, p. 165). The one who was honored and promoted by Justinian was not Mundīr but Arethas, and there is no evidence that the two titles were conferred on Arethas then. What Justinian did was the conferment of the extraordinary *Basileia* on Arethas around

early 580s, when Maurice downgraded them, it is possible that the non-Ghassānid phylarchs were advanced at the expense of the Ghassānids, who then lived in partial eclipse. This is reflected in the sudden appearance of a Salīhid phylarch, taking a prominent part in the Persian war of Maurice's reign in 586.<sup>51</sup> As this Abimēnos is also attested for the reign of Maurice, this non-Ghassānid phylarch could have been the beneficiary of Maurice's attention and so received from the emperor the high title of *πανεύφημος*.

Thus Gregorios Abimēnos could have been a non-Ghassānid Arab phylarch in Syria. Yet in spite of these arguments in support of the editor's suggestion, it is doubtful that he was. His name, Gregorios, militates against this identification. Not a single Arab phylarch of the Byzantine period had a non-Arab name in spite of the strong adherence of the Arab *foederati* to Christianity. Furthermore, the tone and style of the inscription suggest not an Arab phylarch but a Rhomaic Arab, a local notable from Anasartha.

#### The Ghassānids and Bonosus

The Ghassānids established good relations with Phocas who had returned their king from exile and murdered their archenemy Maurice. They fought with the imperial army against the Persians in the wars of the reign, and, as has been said in the preceding section, they even fought valiantly and penetrated into Persian territory in a war in which the Persians won the upper hand. Yet the honeymoon with Phocas could not have endured indefinitely since the emperor turned out to be a fanatic Dyophysite who reversed the tolerant policy of Maurice in dealing with the Monophysite Orient.<sup>52</sup> At the beginning, this may not have unduly disturbed the Ghassānids who perhaps, after their experiences in the reign of Maurice, could have taken a more prudent line in support of Monophysitism. But toward the end of the reign, Phocas became intolerably aggressive toward the Monophysites, and this culminated in the dispatch of Bonosus to the East in 609 to deal with the Monophysite insurrection that broke out in Antioch in 608 and spread throughout the whole region from Syria in the north to Palestine in the south. Bonosus, as count of the East, and Cottanas, the commander of the army, mercilessly and brutally quelled the insurrection.<sup>53</sup>

What the reaction of the Monophysite Ghassānids was to this is not recorded. But it is difficult to think that this would not have touched their

530. On these two points, and these two ranks, see the present writer in "The Patriarchate of Arethas" and "On the Titulature of the Emperor Heraclius," *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 289–96. Nöldeke, whom the editor cites (*GF*, 15), was speaking of the titles in general and not of what was or was not conferred ca. 530 on Arethas.

<sup>51</sup> On this see above, 551.

<sup>52</sup> On the ecclesiastical policy of Phocas, see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 74–75.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–77.

religious sensibilities. The situation recalls 519 when, on his accession, Chalcedonian Justin I initiated a persecution of the Monophysites that resulted in the withdrawal of the Ghassānids from the service of Byzantium,<sup>54</sup> and what happened in 609 was far more serious. It is therefore quite certain that the Ghassānids would not have participated in the brutalization of their fellow Monophysites by responding to any calls from Bonosus for military support. At best they would have stayed aloof, and at worst they would have withdrawn from the service.

Bonosus was soon to be engaged in a military encounter with the forces of the revolution against Phocas that was being directed from Africa by the elder Heraclius. His nephew Nicetas was already in possession of Egypt, and Bonosus consequently marched against him. Again the question arises of whether or not the Ghassānids participated in this campaign with Bonosus. Ghassānid phylarchal presence is attested in Palaestina Secunda and Tertia not far from Caesarea, the headquarters of Bonosus, and the Ghassānids would have been invaluable to him in his campaign against Nicetas since he would have had to pass through Sinai and "Arabia in Egypt."<sup>55</sup> But, as has been suggested, the Ghassānids must have been antagonized by the brutal anti-Monophysite measures of Bonosus, and if they kept aloof during these brutalities, they certainly would not have supported him in his march against Nicetas. As the conflict turned out, Bonosus lost the battle of Alexandria against Nicetas in November 609, and the battle ended with the flight of Bonosus and his return to Alexandria.<sup>56</sup>

The Ghassānids must have felt happy with the outcome of the struggle and the defeat of Bonosus, the agent of the tyrant Phocas. Immediately after the death of Phocas in October 610, the Ghassānids appear fighting the wars of Heraclian Byzantium against the Persians, and so must have sided with the emperor and his cousin Nicetas in the struggle for Oriens.<sup>57</sup> They must have felt grateful to the new emperor who had rid the empire of the anti-Monophysite tyrant Phocas; indeed it is possible that Nicetas in Egypt might have been in touch with the Ghassānids as a discontented element in Oriens against Bonosus and his master. His uncle, the elder Heraclius, knew the Ghassānids when he saw service on the eastern front in the 580s and may have been involved in the release of their king Mundir from exile in 602. None of this is

<sup>54</sup> See above, 34–36.

<sup>55</sup> Palaestina Tertia, which included Sinai, was explicitly assigned to the Ghassānid Abū Karib around 530 and since then remained a province in which the Ghassānids had a strong presence. As recently as the Persian wars of Phocas' reign, the Arab poet Ḥassān spoke of the Ghassānid federate presence on both sides of Ayla, i.e., Palaestina Tertia; see above, 625. So Bonosus could not have ignored it and must have been aware of its value.

<sup>56</sup> See Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 83–86.

<sup>57</sup> On this see the following chapter.



certain, but if it is, it will provide a background for the excellent relations of the Ghassānids with the new emperor, which lasted for some three decades, and which seem to have restored the Ghassānids to the preeminent position they had held during the reigns of Arethas and Muḍīr in the sixth century.

#### IV. APPENDIX

##### Ibn Ḥamdīs on Sicily

The revolution brought about in the life of the federate tribes of Byzantium by the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests is well illustrated by the case of the Azd group, to whom the Ghassānids belonged, and Kalb, another tribal group of the Byzantine federate shield in Oriens. Both were involved in the history of the Islamic Occident, and Sicily in particular, whither Muḍīr was exiled.

Some hundred years after Muḍīr left Sicily, a relative of his, Ḥassān ibn-al-Nu'mān al-Ghassānī,<sup>1</sup> conquered Carthage for the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik, the city whence Innocentius wrote to Pope Gregory on behalf of Muḍīr. Early in the ninth century, Asad ibn-al-Furāt began the conquest of Sicily for the Aghlabids of Ifrīqiya (Africa) and died fighting before Syracuse in 828. In so doing, he set the stage for the Arab occupation and control of Sicily, which under the Kalbite dynasty was completed, and for the flowering of Muslim Arab civilization in Sicily, during which Palermo became the principal cultural center. Its Muslim Arab *Nachleben* flourished under the Hohenstaufen emperors, who were Arabophiles and Islamophiles.<sup>2</sup>

In both the Arab and Norman periods, Sicily knew of two Arabs who were related to the exiled Ghassānid king Muḍīr. Syracuse produced the Azdite Ibn Ḥamdīs, the principal Arab poet of Muslim Sicily, who was born on that island and died in exile in 1133. In the thirteenth century, a book on falconry, *Kitāb Ḍawārī al-Ṭayr*, written by the Ghassānid al-Ghiṭrīf ibn-Qudāma for the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdī,<sup>3</sup> was translated into Latin for the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II, ca. 1240. So Sicily, which for the Ghassānid Arabs in Oriens had grievous associations as the place of exile for their king Muḍīr, became in mediæval times an Arab homeland. After Muḍīr left Sicily in 602 for Oriens and Ghassānland, he could not have expressed any nostalgia for the island in which he had languished for twenty years. Exactly the opposite was true of his relative, the Azdite Ibn Ḥamdīs, who left Sicily for Andalusia and whose poetic genius was fired mainly by nostalgia for his homeland, Sicily.

This is how Ibn Ḥamdīs sounds in the Italian translation of Francesco Gabrieli, the distinguished Arabist/Islamicist and felicitous translator of Oriental poetry.<sup>4</sup> On Sicily in general, without mentioning its name, he says:

<sup>1</sup> On Ḥassān ibn-al-Nu'mān al-Ghassānī, see *EP*, s.v.

<sup>2</sup> On Muslim Sicily, see the chapter in P. K. Hitti, *A History of the Arabs* (London, 1970), 602–14.

<sup>3</sup> See *Kitāb Ḍawārī al-Ṭayr*, ed. D. Möller (Stuttgart, 1986), introduction.

<sup>4</sup> On Ibn Ḥamdīs and the Arab Sicilian poets, see F. Gabrieli, *Storia della letteratura araba* (Milan, 1962), 194–98, esp. pp. 195–96. The most satisfactory edition of the *Dīwān* is that of Iḥsān Abbās, *Dīwān Ibn Ḥamdīs* (Beirut, 1960).

Un paese cui la colomba prestò il suo collare, e il pavone vestí del  
manto screziato delle sue penne.

On Noto (Arabic Nūṭis) in Sicily, he says:

Custodisca Iddio una casa in Noto, e fluiscano su di lei le rigonfie  
nuvole!

Con nostalgia filiale anelo alla patria, verso cui mi attirano le di-  
more delle belle sue donne.

E chi ha lasciato l'anima a vestigio di una dimora, a quella brama  
col corpo fare ritorno . . .

Viva quella terra popolata e culta, vivano anche di lei le tracce e le  
rovine!

Io anelo alla mia terra, nella cui polvere si sono consunte le membra e  
le ossa dei miei.

Most attractive is this passage on Sicily, which he mentions by name:

Ricordo la Sicilia, e il dolore ne suscita nell'anima il ricordo.

Un luogo di giovanili follie ora deserto, animato un dí dal fiore dei  
nobili ingegni.

Se son stato cacciato da un Paradiso, come posso io darne notizia?

Se non fosse l'amarrezza delle lacrime, le crederei i fiumi di quel para-  
diso.

## VIII

### The Reign of Heraclius (610–641)

With the exception of the reign of Justinian, that of Heraclius was the longest during which the Ghassānids served as *foederati* of Byzantium. What is more, it witnessed the restoration of the harmonious relationship between the Ghassānids and the central government that had obtained in its golden period when Justinian ruled in the sixth century. The reign was also the crucial one that terminated the proto-Byzantine period and ushered in the middle period, after the two disastrous wars with the Persians and the Muslim Arabs. The Ghassānids were involved in both wars. Hence the importance of a detailed discussion of their history in this period, especially as their role is either unnoticed or misrepresented by modern historians. Moreover, as the wars of the period are so badly documented in the sources, especially the Byzantine ones, the new data on the Ghassānids, although modest, are a welcome addition to the history of these wars, particularly as they come from contemporary Arabic sources.

The reign is neatly divisible into three periods or decades. In the first, the Ghassānids fight with the army of Oriens against the Persian invader of the diocese; in the second, after withdrawing to Anatolia, they fight with Heraclius during his counteroffensive which ended victoriously with the battle of Nineveh; in the third, they fight in Oriens against the Muslim Arabs and are defeated, together with the imperial army, at the Yarmūk in 636, which virtually brings to a close their role as *foederati* in Oriens.

#### I. THE FIRST DECADE

This decade of the reign witnessed the advance of Persian arms against Byzantium on all fronts in Anatolia and Oriens. What is relevant to Ghassānid participation in this period is the Persians' advance against Oriens.<sup>1</sup> During

<sup>1</sup> For the course of the war in this decade and the next two, the reader may consult the fairly recent work of N. Stratos, although the old work of A. Pernice (*L'imperatore Eraclio* [Florence, 1905]) has not entirely outlived its usefulness. These works provide the documentation for the general course of the war and also the relevant bibliographies. Hence these do not appear in this chapter, which concentrates on the Arab and Ghassānid profile of the war.

Anatolia receives more attention than Oriens in the sources for this period and in modern

the reign of Phocas, they had made some impressive gains, and at the end of the reign and the beginning of Heraclius', they occupied Armenia, Mesopotamia, and a portion of Syria. A Syriac source<sup>2</sup> is very specific on the unfavorable military position of Byzantium in 610, when the Euphrates had become the frontier between the two powers and the Persians were in possession of such Euphratesian fortresses as Callinicum and Circesium; and, in August of that year, they captured Zenobia. This posed a direct threat to the Ghassānids, since this occupation brought the Persians perilously near Ghassānland and the limitrophe they were protecting from the Euphrates to Ayla. The Persian advance against Oriens went through two phases: the operations of the year 611 and those, after a lull of two years, of 613/14—and with it the virtual fall of Oriens by 616/17, the prelude to the occupation of Egypt in 616.

1. The first phase: 611. The Persian general Shahrbarāz advanced and captured Antioch,<sup>3</sup> then Apamea, and finally Emesa. Conditions were favorable in Oriens, especially after the chaos and disarray caused by the campaign of Bonosus against the Monophysites of Oriens. The sources record a battle. Nicetas rushed from Egypt to stem the wave of the Persian advance, and a battle was fought near Emesa at the monastery of St. Thomas. It is not clear from the sources whether it was a Byzantine victory or defeat. It may have been a draw since the Persians halted their advance against Oriens for two years (611–613), during which a lull prevailed in the fighting.

The sources do not record Ghassānid participation in this phase of the war, but this is not surprising. They are scant, and the participation of the federates would not have been noted in them. The Ghassānids, however, must have participated in this phase and must have given Nicetas every assistance. (a) Nicetas represented the house of Heraclius and the revolt against Phocas, who had recently sent Bonosus to quell the Monophysite revolt in Oriens, which he brutally did. The Ghassānids must have welcomed the defeat of Bonosus by Nicetas in 610 and hailed him as a deliverer from Bonosus and his

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discussions; only the siege and fall of Jerusalem receive adequate coverage. This chapter will now provide a few more data for operations in Oriens which will supplement the laconic statements in the sources and will make more intelligible the course of the Persian advance in Oriens. Walter Kaegi has already contributed to a better understanding of the reign of Heraclius when he analyzed two hagiographic works, the *Vitae* of Theodore of Sykeon and Anastasius the Persian; see below, notes 8 and 41.

<sup>2</sup> See *Chronicon Miscellaneum ad Annum Domini 724 pertinens*, ed. E. W. Brooks, trans. J. B. Chabot, *Chronica Minora*, CSCO, Scriptorum Syri, ser. 3, vol. 4 (Paris, 1904), versio, p. 113, lines 11–16.

<sup>3</sup> Memories of Chosroes I's capture of Antioch in 540 must still have been fresh in the mind of his grandson, Chosroes II, whose megalomania may have driven him not only to emulate but to outdo what his grandfather had done against Byzantium during the reign of Justinian. He obviously succeeded since the deepest penetration that Chosroes I effected in Byzantine territory and in Oriens was the capture of Antioch.

master. The elder Heraclius may also have been involved in the attempt to free Mundir from his Sicilian exile in A.D. 600 or in actually freeing him in 602. Nicetas may even have been advised by the elder Heraclius to contact the Ghassānids in order to win them as allies, since he must have been well aware of the estrangement between the Ghassānids and the central Chalcedonian government.<sup>4</sup> (b) The Persians were fast approaching Ghassānland itself in Phoenicia Libanensis, Palaestina Secunda, and Arabia, and it is natural to suppose that the Ghassānids would have rushed to the defense of Oriens not only as *foederati* but as Ghassānids defending their own settlements. Agapius<sup>5</sup> states that the final battle was a victory near Emesa for Byzantium, and it is possible that the Ghassānids contributed to it since they must have fought with more than their usual ardor and enthusiasm, defending, as they were, their own land. Perhaps the lull of two years could be explained by the fact that the Persians were badly beaten and so halted in order to regroup their strength before they opened another offensive against Oriens two years later.<sup>6</sup> (c) Most important, the Ghassānids are attested as having fought the Persians immediately before and after 611, and the attestation comes from contemporary sources, the poetry of their panegyrist Ḥassān.<sup>7</sup> During the reign of Phocas, they even carried the war into Persian territory; and in 613 they fought in Ghassānland itself in Palaestina Secunda, but were beaten by the Persians. So it is impossible to believe that they would have stayed out of the operations of 611.

## 2. The second phase: 613/14. Ghassānid participation in the operations

<sup>4</sup> The elder Heraclius would have known the Ghassānids as a federate contingent in his army during the Persian war, and these did take part in that war after their restoration in 587. On the possible relations between the Ghassānids and the elder Heraclius, see above, 603–4.

As far as Nicetas was concerned, the Ghassānids were an element in the military picture which he could not ignore. They had lain between him and Constantinople if he wanted to march by the overland route to join Heraclius in 610 during the revolt against Phocas; and now, after the success of the revolt, they were federates to be drafted in the war effort against the Persians in Oriens, the topography of which they knew better than Nicetas did.

<sup>5</sup> See Agapius Mabbugensis, *Historia Universalis*, ed. L. Cheikho, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, ser. 3, vol. 5 (Paris, 1912), textus, p. 331, lines 11–13. The short statement in Agapius is endowed with a specificity that could argue authenticity; he speaks of Nicetas, son of Gregory, going out to meet the Marzubān (Marzpan), the satrap who had conquered Antioch, Apamea, and Emesa. The name of the Marzubān (Kasru'ān) is suspect, but must be Shahrbarāz.

The context suggests that Agapius was speaking of the year 611 to which he assigns the victory of Nicetas over the satrap. He does, however, mention Caesarea, a city that had fallen into the hands of the Persians in that year, and if the date 611 is correct, then this must be Caesarea in Cappadocia, which fell in that year.

<sup>6</sup> They could also have been distracted by operations in Anatolia in this period, which centered on Caesarea. Perhaps the Byzantine reverses in Oriens may have been due to the fact that part of the army in Oriens was detached to fight in Anatolia. This is what Euty chius says on Oriens being denuded of troops during the Persian offensive in Anatolia conducted by Chosroes himself; see Euty chius, *Euty chii patriarchae Alexandrini Annales*, ed. L. Cheikho, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, series 3, tomus IV, textus, p. 218, line 13.

<sup>7</sup> See above, 624–26.

of this phase is attested by the contemporary Arabic poetry of Ḥassān. In 613 the Byzantines made a stand at Antioch, and Heraclius himself came to join Nicetas in the battle of Antioch in which both were defeated.<sup>8</sup> The Ghassānids must have joined Nicetas in his march to effect a junction with Heraclius in northern Syria. However, their participation in the battle of Antioch is not recorded in the scanty sources, but it is later in this phase when the war was fought in Ghassānland in Palaestina Secunda and Arabia. Two poems of Ḥassān ibn-Thābit attest both Ghassānid participation and their defeat. Although noted by Nöldeke briefly in his monograph on the Ghassānids,<sup>9</sup> the data provided by the poet have unfortunately not been laid under contribution by modern historians of the reign of Heraclius. Scanty as the data are, they are important for evidencing Ghassānid participation and the course of this second phase. They are the only ones available for throwing light on this phase of the Persian conquest of Oriens between the fall of Damascus and Jerusalem. The two Arabic poems record that stiff resistance was offered by the Byzantines in Palaestina Secunda in what might be called the battle for Jerusalem and the Holy Land. After the Byzantine and Ghassānid defeat in that province, the Persian advance on Jerusalem was a promenade,<sup>10</sup> through Galilea and Caesarea, until the siege and fall of Jerusalem.

News of the Byzantine-Ghassānid defeat in Palaestina Secunda and Ar-

<sup>8</sup> These are new, important data which the *Vita* of Theodore of Sykeon provides, not used by Stratos in his account of the Persian advance in Oriens. See *Vie de Théodore de Sykéon*, ed. A.-J. Festugière, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 48, I, texte grec (Brussels, 1970), pp. 153–54, sec. 166. For Nicetas to have joined Heraclius at Antioch, he must have passed through territories the Persians had occupied when they captured Apamea and Emesa in 611. How he reached Antioch is therefore not clear, and the same is true of Heraclius after the fall of Mesopotamia to the Persians in 611, although the arrival of Heraclius in Antioch is easier to account for. The Ghassānids, who were thoroughly familiar with the terrain and topography in Oriens, could have helped Nicetas.

The *Vita* of St. Theodore of Sykeon thus makes clear that there were two battles for Antioch, one in 611 and another in 613. On extracting new and welcome data on the early years of the reign of Heraclius from this *Vita*, see W. Kaegi, "New Evidence on the Early Reign of Heraclius," *BZ* 66 (1973), 308–30; Kaegi also extracted data from the *Vita* of St. Anastasius the Persian, in "Notes on Hagiographic Sources for Some Institutional Changes and Continuities in the Early Seventh Century," *Byzantina* 7 (1975), 61–70.

<sup>9</sup> See Nöldeke, *GF*, 42–43.

<sup>10</sup> This must have been the case in spite of a garbled statement in the Gregorian version of Antiochus Strategos' account of the fall of Jerusalem in 614. He says: "And they reached Palestine and its borders, and they arrived at Caesarea, which is the metropolis. But there they begged for a truce, and bowed their necks in submission. After that the enemy advanced to Sarapeon and captured it, as well as all the seaboard cities, together with their hamlets." The four Arabic versions of Strategos' account know nothing of the Persians' begging for a truce and bowing their necks. This must refer to the people of Caesarea. For the Gregorian version, see F. C. Conybeare, "Antiochus Strategos' Account of the Sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 614," *English Historical Review* 25 (1910), 503. Further on this and on the Arabic versions, see above, 624. On the Persian advance which ended with the capture of Jerusalem, see the present writer in "Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations," *Byzantion* 59 (1989), 219–21.



abia evidently reverberated in Ḥijāz in the Arabian Peninsula, and reached its two cities, Medina (Yathrib) and Mecca. In Medina the poet Ḥassān, related to the Ghassānids and a frequent visitor at their court in Gaulanitis, recorded the defeat in two of his poems, elegies on the fall of the dynasty or rather its military defeat by the Persians, who are explicitly mentioned in the two poems. In the first poem, he speaks of how Kisrā (Chosroes) had afflicted him with the death of his Ghassānid patron, and he goes on to describe him and the desolation that Ghassānland experienced after the Persian victory.<sup>11</sup> In the second poem, he expresses roughly the same sorrow over the fall of the Ghassānids at the hands of the Persians, and he refers not to Chosroes but to the Persian general who left Ghassānland desolate, and whom he calls Biṭrīq Faris, the *patricius* of Persia.<sup>12</sup> The poet was not a historian, but he has recorded in his two poems precious data on the Persian-Byzantine encounter in Palaestina Secunda, the final stand of the Byzantines before the fall of the Holy Land.

The news reached Mecca, too, where it was reflected in the Koran. In one of the *sūras*, the Koran speaks of the defeat of the Byzantines (the Rūm) in Oriens and also of the eventual Byzantine victory.<sup>13</sup> Later commentators on this reference to the operations of 613/14 in Oriens, such as Ṭabarī in his *Tārīkh*, pinpointed the military defeat to Aḍri'āt<sup>14</sup> in Palaestina Secunda and

<sup>11</sup> For the poem in Arabic, see the *Dīwān of Ḥassān ibn-Thabit*, I, 316; for the commentary, see II, 230–31. It is a pity that Ḥassān does not give the name of the fallen Ghassānid phylarch or king. If he had, he would have solved a major genealogical problem. Nöldeke wondered whether the Ghassānid was executed by the Persians or died in battle. The poem is clear, however, that Kisrā (Chosroes) clearly stands for the Persians, and the Ghassānid must have died in battle defending his Ghassānid home.

<sup>12</sup> Ḥassān's employment of the Byzantine term *Biṭrīq*, *patricius*, attests his Ghassānid connection and familiarity with the term which his own patrons, the Ghassānids, may have received again from Byzantium during the reign of Phocas. Nöldeke refers to the desolation inflicted upon Ghassānland by the Persians (*GF*, 43) and iterates that the two poems must be placed in the context of the Persian campaign of 613–614. The toponyms mentioned in this poem are those of the Ghassānid Gaulanitis. He had referred (p. 42 note 5) to what the Persians perpetrated in this region and cited his *Ṭabarī-Übersetzung*, 299 ff. It is noteworthy that a Persian term, possibly going back to this period, has survived in the region, that of al-Sallār (Persian *sālār*, "commander, general"). It appears in the toponym Qaniyyat or Qunayyat al-Sallār. Such must have been the Persian term that described the Persian general who conducted the operation, and not Biṭrīq. It is noteworthy that the term "sālār" was known in Egypt during the Persian occupation; see Severus Ben el Moqaffa, *Historia Patriarcharum*, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, vol. 9, p. 104. For the poem, see *Dīwān Ḥassān*, I, 194–96; for the commentary, see II, 155–56. The poem will be discussed again in the chapter on the Arabic sources in *BASIC* II.

<sup>13</sup> See Koran, chap. XXX, verses, 1–6.

<sup>14</sup> See Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ed. A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1961), II, 185. Ṭabarī mentions the name of the Byzantine commander and gives it as QṬMT (without vocalization), which could be a corruption of Nicetas. It is phonetically also allied to Cottanas, the general whom Phocas dispatched with Bonusus to Oriens to quell the Monophysite revolt.

later to Jerusalem. In the Meccan period of Muḥammad's Prophethood (610–622), the early Muslims were on the side of the Byzantines during the Persian-Byzantine conflict, since they conceived of the war in religious terms, that of monotheists against the fire-worshippers. Hence the sympathies of the Muslims were with the Byzantines, and their support of the Byzantine cause is enthusiastically reflected in five verses from the Koran:

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent.

1. Alif. Lām. Mīm.
2. The Romans have been defeated
3. In the nearer land, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious
4. Within ten years—Allah's is the command in the former case and in the latter—and in that day believers will rejoice
5. In Allah's help to victory. He helpeth to victory whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Merciful:
6. It is a promise of Allah. Allah faileth not His promise, but most of mankind know not.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the Arabic sources provide new important data for understanding the course of the campaign of 613/14 in which the Persians won Oriens. Specifically, they make clear that before the fall of Jerusalem and the occupation of the Holy Land, the battle for both had raged in Palaestina Secunda, defended by the Ghassānids. It is therefore regrettable that modern historians of the wars of Heraclius are unaware of the Ghassānid contribution, although Nöldeke had touched on it.<sup>16</sup> The result was that the Ghassānid contribution remained unknown to most historians of the period. When the father of *Byzantino-arabica*, A. A. Vasiliev, wrote his *History of the Byzantine Empire*, he chose to remember the Arab contribution in terms that at best were ambiguous and at worst were depreciatory. At the time he wrote his standard work, he had no great interest in the pre-Islamic period of Arab-Byzantine relations,<sup>17</sup> and so when he discussed the Persian invasion of Oriens, he quoted N. P. Kondakov: "This invasion freed the marauding Arabian tribes from the ties of association and the fear which had controlled them, and they began to form the unity which made possible their general attacks of a later period."<sup>18</sup> What is relevant in this quotation is not the last sentence which reflects no knowl-

<sup>15</sup> The translation is taken from *The Glorious Qur'ān*, trans. M. M. Pickthall (New York, 1977), p. 423.

<sup>16</sup> Perhaps because he only touched on it, and so these important data have been lost in a monograph that was written a hundred years ago.

<sup>17</sup> On this see the present writer in *BAFOC*, xviii.

<sup>18</sup> See A. A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, Wisc., 1952), 195. The quotation comes from Kondakov's Russian work, *An Archaeological Journey through Syria and Palestine* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 173–74.

edge of the course of events that led to the rise of Islam and the Arab Conquests, but the first statement in which occurs the phrase "marauding Arabian tribes." This could suggest the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula who were in the habit of raiding the frontier, but the rest of the sentence which speaks of "the ties of association" suggest the *foederati* of Oriens and not the marauding pastoralists of the Peninsula.<sup>19</sup> If so, this would be an untrue statement since the Ghassānid *foederati* fought with Byzantium against the Persian invaders. However, the possibly confused identification of the two groups of Arabs by Kondakov is reminiscent of a statement in Theophanes for the year 613: the Saracens raided Syria, plundered a number of villages, and then withdrew.<sup>20</sup> It is possible that Kondakov had this statement in mind when he identified such Saracens with the *foederati*, but if so, he does not indicate it. There is no need to dispute what Theophanes reports, which was natural in such circumstances, namely, that the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula took advantage of the chaos and confusion in Oriens in this period and raided the diocese.

Confirmation of what Theophanes says on raids from non-federate Arab pastoralists comes from a contemporary source, the *Life of St. John the Almsgiver*, patriarch of Alexandria. In one of the sections of the *Life*, in which the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by the Persians are described, mention is made of the patriarch's dispatch of a number of ecclesiastics to ransom some prisoners from the hands of Saracens ὑπὸ Μαδινηέων who had raided the region of Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup> The Arabs are not referred to as Arabs or Saracens but by the biblical term Midianites. The *Life* may have described these raiding

<sup>19</sup> This is equally clear, or even clearer, in the French version of the quotation which reads: "cette invasion libéra les tribus pillardes arabes des conventions qui les lisait"; see A. A. Vasiliev, *Histoire de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1932), 258.

Kondakov's statement was both unjustified and unfortunate. In the Russian version of his work, the relevant sentence on the Arabs appears on pp. 173–74 without any documentation to support it. The two footnotes (p. 173 note 3 and p. 174 note 1) which go with what precedes and follows the sentence on the Arabs are from Clermont-Ganneau on the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians, and not on the Arabs. Vasiliev quoted him without checking his sources, which was unfortunate, since later scholars quote Vasiliev, thus giving the impression that it was the Byzantino-arabist that made the statement; see Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 108 note 16.

<sup>20</sup> See Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 300, lines 17–18; the statement is repeated by Cedrenus, *Historiarium Compendium* (Bonn ed.), p. 714, lines 22–23; and Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, 401.

<sup>21</sup> For the *Life of St. John the Almsgiver*, see E. Dawes and N. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Oxford, 1948), 204. For the Greek text and the reference to these Saracens as Midianites, see H. Delehayé, "Une vie inédite de saint Jean l'aumônier," *AB* 45 (1927), p. 23, line 35. That this was a reference to the biblical Midianites was understood by the editor of the *Life*, in *Three Byzantine Saints*, 264. Their identification with the Ma'addite Arabs must be ruled out. These were too distant in the Arabian Peninsula to be able to raid Palestine; besides, their name is spelled differently in Greek, where they appear as Μαδιηνοί as in Procopius, *History*, I.xix.14. For this identification, see B. M. Wheeler, "Imagining the Capture of Jerusalem," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 57 (1991), 73 note 18.

Saracens accurately as coming from Madyan (Midian), across the Gulf of Eilat, and if so, they would have been Peninsular Arabs; or the *Life* may have been only biblicalizing the name of the Arabs, and if so, they would have been Saracen nomads who roamed the deserts of Palaestina Tertia.

In addition to raiders from the Arabian Peninsula, there were others from within Palaestina Tertia who attacked the monasteries—pockets of nomads who still persisted in the deserts of southern Palestine. These have been noted by the editor and commentator of the *Acta* of St. Anastasius the Persian.<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that in accounts of these raids on monasteries, the inmates would take refuge in Arabia, which in this context can only mean the Provincia, the headquarters of the Ghassānids, who had given shelter to Christian prelates earlier in this period. Perhaps the Arab federates of the Palestinian Parembolē also may have fled to the Provincia when they were attacked and overwhelmed by the Persians, just as the regular Byzantine soldiers in the region of Jericho also fled, although whither is not known.

## II. THE SECOND DECADE

For the Arab involvement in the operations of this decade conducted in Armenia and Azerbaijan across the Tigris, the only sources are Greek: Theophanes, Pisides, and the *Chronicon Paschale*. Although scanty, they remain important, and the two latter sources are contemporary. Two of the references are explicitly to the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium, and they occur in Theophanes and the *Chronicon Paschale*; the third refers to the Arab allies of Persia and occurs in Pisides.

### A

1. Theophanes. While recounting the military operations of 622/23 during the counteroffensive of Heraclius against the Persians, Theophanes devotes an entire passage to the Arab participation in the campaign. Heraclius hears that Chosroes is encamped with forty thousand of his warriors in the city of Gazacon, so he hastens to attack but sends ahead as scouts some of the Saracens who were under his command. These encounter the guard force of Chosroes, massacre some of them, bind the rest together with their leader, and bring them to Heraclius. On hearing of this, Chosroes flees from Gazacon, leaving behind him both the town and his army. Heraclius pursues him and slays some of his soldiers on his arrival, while the remainder flee. On reaching Gazacon Heraclius rests his army in the suburbs.<sup>23</sup>

The Greek version of Theophanes reads as follows: ἀκούσας δὲ

<sup>22</sup> See B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse* (Paris, 1992), 153–54, 177–79, 187–88. On this work, see Appendix, below.

<sup>23</sup> Stratos (*Byzantium*, I, 155–57) discusses the military operation. For the date of this campaign, see his views on p. 153, where he favors 624; see also his Note XIV, pp. 363–65. For the toponymy of the campaign, especially Ganzac, see p. 366.

Ἡράκλειος, ὅτι Χοσρόης ἐν Γαζακῷ τῇ πόλει ἐστὶ σὺν μ' χιλιάσιν ἀνδρῶν πολεμιστῶν, ὥρμησε κατ' αὐτοῦ· καὶ προπέμψας τινὰς τῶν ὑπ' αὐτὸν Σαρακηνοὺς προτρέχειν, συναντῶσι τῇ τοῦ Χοσρόου βίγλα, καὶ τούτων τοὺς μὲν ἀνεῖλον, τοὺς δὲ πεδήσαντες σὺν τῷ στρατηγῷ αὐτῶν τῷ βασιλεῖ προσήνεγκαν.<sup>24</sup> As is clear from this account, it was a significant operation both in terms of what the Saracen *foederati* achieved against the guard force and of the sequel when Chosroes fled and Heraclius pursued and marched successfully to the suburbs of Gazacon.<sup>25</sup>

2. The *Chronicon Paschale*. The second and final mention of the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium comes in the *Chronicon Paschale*, in the victory bulletin<sup>26</sup> that Heraclius sent to the Senate in Constantinople after his victory at Nineveh in 628. The reference to the Saracens/Arabs comes when Heraclius is describing the events that attended the proclamation of Seiroios,<sup>27</sup> king of the Persians, and his relations with his father, Chosroes, before the latter was killed shortly after the proclamation of the former king on 25 February 628. In order to find out how matters stood between Chosroes and Shirawayh, Heraclius sends part of his army and also the Saracens whom he describes as those who live within our Christ-loving polity or state: καὶ ἐκ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν τῶν ὄντων ὑπὸ τὴν φιλόχριστον ἡμῶν πολιτείαν, διὰ τό, ὡς εἴρηται, γνῶναι ἡμᾶς ἀκριβῶς τὰ ἐκεῖσε κινήθέντα.<sup>28</sup>

This reference to the Saracens in the *Chronicon Paschale* is not as impor-

<sup>24</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 307, lines 23–28.

<sup>25</sup> Strangely enough, Stratos, who wrote a detailed account of the wars of Heraclius, leaves out Arab participation in this campaign: Stratos, *Byzantium*, I, 155–56.

<sup>26</sup> For the letter, see *Chronicon Paschale* (Bonn ed.), I, 727–34. For a translation and commentary, see Michael and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale*, Translated Texts for Historians 7 (Liverpool, 1989), 182–89.

<sup>27</sup> This is how the name of the king appears in Heraclius' letter. It is Persian Shīrūyh (Arabic Shirawayh), but his real name was Kawad. The two names, Kawād Shīrūyh, appear in his letter to Heraclius in *Chronicon Paschale*, I, 735. Stratos (*Byzantium*, I, 225) etymologizes the name wrongly from Shir (Schir), "king," possibly mistaking Shir (lion) for Shah (king). For the etymology of Shīrūyh and a discussion of the name, see Nöldeke, *PAS*, 361 note 2.

<sup>28</sup> *Chronicon Paschale*, I, 730, lines 8–9. Apparently this reference to the Arabs occurs in a previous letter which Heraclius had written to the Senate from Ganzac and to which he refers in this letter (*ibid.*, p. 729, line 15). So it is in the area of Ganzac and the Lesser Zab that the Saracens operated when they were sent by Heraclius. Ganzac lies to the southeast of Lake Urmia.

In "Ghassān *post* Ghassān," p. 323, I noted this reference to the Saracens in Heraclius' letter and said that Heraclius "had specifically singled them out for honorable mention in the victory bulletin which he sent to the Senate." This was an overstatement based on a misapprehension that the operation recorded by Theophanes, in which the Arabs distinguished themselves (*Chronographia*, 307) was identical with this one mentioned in Heraclius' letter; see "Ghassān *post* Ghassān" (below, note 43). However, since the sources do not mention the Arabs often and since this was a reference to them in a victory bulletin, this reference remains important and striking.

tant as that in Theophanes and is much less detailed; it is a passing reference. But it attests the federate Saracen presence in the last year of the Persian war when Heraclius was fighting the Persians on their own ground. This certainly argues that the Arab *foederati* did participate in the operations of the entire counteroffensive, since they are attested in the first and last years of the war. Their attestation in the first year alone could argue for that participation, since it is incomprehensible that after their first success they would have been left out of future campaigns. But the evidence from the *Chronicon Paschale* is welcome since it clinches the point and records their participation in the last year of the war, thus making it impossible to conclude that they did not participate in the intervening period between the first and last years of the counteroffensive. That such participation in the campaigns of every year is not recorded does not militate against this conclusion since the sources do not specifically record their participation, which remains only implied.

3. Pisides. The earliest reference to the Arabs/Saracens in the war comes in the *Expeditio Persica* II, of George of Pisidia.<sup>29</sup> It is the least significant because the Saracens mentioned there are those allied to Persia. In the very first campaign of his counteroffensive (622/23), but at a place not clearly defined, possibly in Armenia,<sup>30</sup> Heraclius sends a scouting party consisting of swift, well-organized cavalry to reconnoiter.<sup>31</sup> It encounters a company or battalion of "long-haired Saracens," τὸ τῶν Σαρακηνῶν τάγμα τῶν πολυτρίχων, who had hoped to ambush the Byzantine army. They are the Saracen allies of Persia, and their leader is described as a phylarch (*archiphylos*). These Persian Saracens were caught by the scouting party, and their chief was brought before Heraclius in chains. However, the emperor's clemency pardoned him instead of punishing him, thus giving him hope that he might again reach a position of command in the Byzantine army. Heraclius' clemency is finally praised for drawing to itself the "untrustworthy barbarians."<sup>32</sup>

Pisides wrote as a panegyrist rather than as a historian; hence this long but uninformative passage on the Saracens of Persia comes to thirty-two lines.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> For the long passage discussed in this section, see *Giorgio di Pisidia: Poemi*, ed. and trans. A. Pertusi, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina* 7 (Rome, 1959), I, p. 107, line 206–p. 108, line 238. The text is accompanied by excellent notes and an Italian translation.

<sup>30</sup> Stratos (*Byzantium*, I, 139) suggests that after taking the Caesarea-Melitene road, Heraclius turned northeast, and it is there that the encounter involving the Saracens took place. Theophanes explicitly states that it was in Armenia; but see Pertusi, *Poemi*, I, p. 152, note on line 206, where he thinks Theophanes is inexact unless he had used a source other than Pisides.

<sup>31</sup> Pertusi, *Poemi*, I, p. 107, lines 207–8.

<sup>32</sup> For the long passage in Pisides and these phrases describing the Persian Saracens and their leader, see *ibid.*, pp. 107–8, lines 205–39.

<sup>33</sup> As noted by N. Oikonomides who observed that Pisides expatiates on minor events, including this description of the captured Saracen leader, which takes thirty-two lines of his poem; see his "A Chronological Note on the First Persian Campaign of Heraclius (622),"



The historiography of the period would have been advantaged, however, if Pisides had given the name of this Saracen chief or had been more specific about his group. These Saracens could not have been the Lakhmids, since that dynasty fell around A.D. 600, but the Persians no doubt had other Arab tribal groups at their disposal as allies in the war against Byzantium, and these must have been one of them.<sup>34</sup>

More important is the identity of the scouting party that Heraclius sent out. These could have been Saracens too, since scouting and reconnaissance were some of the main duties of the Saracen contingent in the Byzantine army. Besides, they are described as swift cavalry troops, which applies to the Arab horse. Since Saracens (the Ghassānids) are attested the following year in the army of Heraclius,<sup>35</sup> this confirms the suspicion that these were Saracens, probably the Ghassānids, and they do function in the same manner as scouts sent out to explore. This long passage in Pisides was summarized by Theophanes who places the encounter in Armenia.<sup>36</sup> He does not add anything but describes the Byzantine scouting party as "choice" or "select" men (ἐπιλέκτους). This, too, could suggest the Ghassānids whose scouting activity reached a high degree of professionalism. But no certainty can be predicated of this identification.

## B

The question inevitably arises as to the identity of these Saracens who participated in the operations of Heraclius' counteroffensive against the Persians, recorded by Theophanes and the *Chronicon Paschale*.<sup>37</sup> Before this decade, Anatolia knew no Saracen *foederati* who were recruited and stationed in Oriens. These must therefore have been withdrawn from Oriens after that diocese was lost to the Persians, just as what had survived of the Byzantine army of the Orient had been. How they made their way to Anatolia admits of no definite answer, but their route thither may be charted as follows.

a. Some of them may have retreated with Heraclius after they had fought with him and were defeated by the Persians at Antioch in 613. Heraclius certainly made his way back to Anatolia with some of his army. One source speaks of a battle in Cilicia just after the battle of Antioch in 613 between the

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*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1975), 7. For this reason it has not been quoted *in extenso*, but only summarized.

<sup>34</sup> Pertusi's suggestion that these probably went over to the Byzantines and that they were the Saracens mentioned by Theophanes (*Chronographia*, p. 307) has no basis in fact; see Pertusi, *Poemi*, note on line 237.

<sup>35</sup> See their contribution to the capture of Chosroes' guard force near Ganzac, above, 642.

<sup>36</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 304, lines 13–18.

<sup>37</sup> The episode recorded by Pisides has been left out since it is not absolutely certain that the scouting party was Arab.

Persians and the Byzantines, which thus confirms the Heraclian retreat from Antioch.<sup>38</sup>

b. Some no doubt did not withdraw with Heraclius to Anatolia in 613, since the federate Arab resistance to the Persian advance is attested in the south, in Palaestina Secunda. So the chances are that most of them retreated with Nicetas as he moved south to fight for Palestine. After the fall of Jerusalem, they must have retreated to Egypt, still in Byzantine hands under Nicetas, where he was receiving refugees. The sea lanes were open between Alexandria and Constantinople for the Byzantine fleet, and the Arab federates could have found their way to Constantinople with Nicetas after the latter finally withdrew from Egypt in 617 following the Persian victory and the occupation of the country. Once in Anatolia, Heraclius incorporated them into his New Army. His father had already fought with them in the Persian war of Maurice's reign, and he must have known that they had an important function to perform in the war against the Persians and in terrain familiar to them.

As to their identity, there is not much doubt that they were the Ghassānids, who had been for more than a century the principal Arab tribal group among the Arab *foederati* of Byzantium. They had dwarfed all the others, whose names hardly appear in the sixth century except fitfully, as in 586 when a scion of the old Salīhids appears fighting on the Persian front under the name of Zogomos. Furthermore, the Ghassānids are attested as having fought in Palaestina Secunda in 613 in the first decade.

If they had made their way into Arabia after the Persian invasion, the Arabic sources, which are not inconsiderable for this period, would have mentioned it or referred to them. Their relatives, the Azdite tribes of Medina al-Aws and al-Khazraj, needed help in the second decade of the seventh century, and if the Ghassānids had been available they would have called on them. When Muḥammad became the master of Medina in the third decade of the century, he sent out expeditions in Ḥijāz and in northern Arabia against various groups, and yet there is no reference to the Ghassānids as a group in Ḥijāz or Arabia in these sources which are detailed on the Prophet's expeditions.<sup>39</sup> Thus the silence of the sources on a Ghassānid presence in Arabia in this period confirms that they chose to withdraw with the Byzantines to Anatolia to fight the inveterate enemy that had ruined their Ghassānland.

<sup>38</sup> Sebeos, *Histoire de Héraclius* (Paris, 1904), 67. This is how Sebeos describes the engagement after that of Antioch: "un autre combat eut lieu près du défilé qui donne accès en Cilicie."

<sup>39</sup> With the exception of an expedition led by the Prophet against Dūmat al-Jandal and dated to the year 5 of the Hijra (A.D. 626–627). See Balāḍurī, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, ed. M. Ḥamīdullāh (Cairo, 1959), I, 341. The historicity of such an expedition in that year cannot be accepted for various reasons, and it is practically certain that it is confused with a later, well-known expedition led by Khālīd ibn-al-Walīd. Iḥsān 'Abbas has recently advanced cogent reasons for rejecting it; see 'Abbas, *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām* (Amman, 1990), 199–200, 213.

The Ghassānids suddenly appear in strength as a principal pillar in the Byzantine defense system in Oriens in the fight against the Muslim Arabs in Oriens in the fourth decade of the century, and they appear working in perfect harmony with the central government. This can only imply good relations with Byzantium also in the previous decade and that, on the evacuation of Oriens by the Persians, the Ghassānids returned whence they had come, in order to take up their duties again for the defense of the diocese. If they are attested in the service of Byzantium in the first and third decades of the reign, the conclusion is certain that they were the *foederati* who fought with Heraclius during his counteroffensive and whose participation has been recorded in the *Chronography* of Theophanes and in the victory bulletin sent by Heraclius to the Senate and recorded in the *Chronicon Paschale*.

Finally, this is confirmed by their withdrawal to Anatolia after the battle of the Yarmūk in 636, when many of them chose not to remain in Oriens but to join the Byzantines across the Taurus.<sup>40</sup> Thus their emigration to Anatolia after the Muslim Conquest of Oriens suggests that the road to Anatolia was a route they had traversed earlier and that they were repeating in the third decade of the reign what they had done in the second.

### III. THE THIRD DECADE

The evacuation of Oriens by the Persians in 629 made possible the return of the Ghassānids and the resumption of their duties as the *foederati* of Byzantium in that diocese. Eight years after the victory of Heraclius over the Persians at Nineveh, Byzantium suffered the crushing defeat of the Yarmūk in 636 at the hands of the Muslim Arabs, which in turn signaled the beginning of the end for the Byzantine presence in Oriens and the Ghassānid federate connection. So most of the history of this decade pertains to the theme of Byzantium and Islam,<sup>41</sup> since the Arab thrusts against Oriens began in 634. It is necessary, therefore, to treat this decade in this volume only as it pertains to the revival of Ghassānid power in Oriens, before the Muslim Arab Conquest wrote *finis* to the proto-Byzantine period in that region.

1. The dominant Ghassānid figure is that of Jabala,<sup>42</sup> the Ghassānid king

<sup>40</sup> See "Ghassān *post* Ghassān," 323–28.

<sup>41</sup> The third part of this trilogy, "Byzantium and Islam in the Seventh Century," in which this third decade will be treated in detail. This theme has begun to receive professional and highly competent treatment. Fred Donner devoted a portion of his work, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), to it. Recently Walter Kaegi gave it a more detailed and concentrated treatment in his *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge, 1992), which reached me after the manuscript of *BASIC* was completed. Both studies are substantial contributions to this theme and will be discussed in the third part of this trilogy, in which a different approach will be taken. Hence the three works will complement one another.

<sup>42</sup> He, too, belongs properly to "Byzantium and Islam in the Seventh Century."

who fights at Yarmūk, conducts negotiations with the caliph Omar, and finally withdraws to Anatolia where he and his descendants settle and form the nucleus of the Ghassānid presence in Anatolia in the middle Byzantine period.<sup>43</sup>

As the Arabic sources are silent on the names of the Ghassānid phylarchs and kings in the second decade of the century,<sup>44</sup> and as the Greek ones are also naturally silent on their names, Jabala emerges from this onomastic void as a large historical personality in this decade. Heraclius must have known him personally from the days of the Ghassānid participation in his counteroffensive, and so he must have returned to Oriens with the blessings of the emperor. Furthermore, Heraclius was determined to solve the ecclesiastical problem and was conciliatory toward the Monophysites.<sup>45</sup> The chief of the Ghassānid house, Jabala, would thus have been of considerable significance to the ecclesiastical policy of Heraclius and how to reconcile the warring denominations through the new doctrine of Monoenergism. The dominant figure of Jabala in this decade could also suggest that Heraclius may have returned to the Ghassānids the privileged position they had enjoyed during the reign of Justinian—the *Basileia* and supreme phylarchate—going even further than Phocas, who might have done it out of spite toward Maurice. It is therefore safe to say that Heraclius had a strongly pro-Arab policy and must have depended on the Ghassānids in his reorganization of Oriens after its evacuation by the Persians in 629, especially as concerns the place of the Arab phylarchate in the new Oriens.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately the state of the sources for all that pertains to Oriens in this period does not provide any significant details.

2. As to Arab and Ghassānid federate presence in Oriens in this period, between Nineveh and Yarmūk, the sources are not informative. But there are enough echoes and hints in the sources, mainly Arabic, to suggest the following conclusions.

a. There is no doubt that it was extensive. After the long and bitter

<sup>43</sup> I touched on Jabala in "Ghassān post Ghassān," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. C. E. Bosworth et al. (Princeton, 1989), 323–52. The question of his conversion to Islam, mentioned by the Arabic sources, was discussed there but only entertained as a possibility with strong reservations. The chances, however, are that he never converted. The sober narrative of Balāḍurī confirms it: Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Bulḍān*, I, 161.

<sup>44</sup> And so in Ḥassān's elegies, the only source available for this decade. In his poetry the Ghassānid figures are anonymous.

<sup>45</sup> His patriarch, Sergius, is said by Theophanes to have been descended from Jacobite parentage; see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 330.

<sup>46</sup> The views of the present writer on this very controversial subject have been expressed in two articles, "Heraclius and the Theme System: New Light from the Arabic," *Byzantion* 57 (1987), 391–403, and "Heraclius and the Theme System: Further Observations," *ibid.*, 59 (1989), 208–43.

experiences of the Persian wars which subjugated the diocese to an occupation of some two decades, there was the need for a drastic and radical reorganization of Oriens, and it has been argued by the present writer that Heraclius "thematized" the diocese in four parts.<sup>47</sup> What is relevant here is that the Persian war could only have enhanced the worth of the Arab *foederati* in the new Oriens and its defense posture. Their worth was tested in both the first and second decades of the war, and they proved to be reliable allies.

b. This is reflected not so much in the Greek sources but in the Arabic, this time not later Islamic sources speaking of the distant pre-Islamic past, but Islamic sources speaking of the Islamic present, the fourth decade of the century, that of the Muslim Arab Conquest of Oriens. These sources reveal an extensive Arab federate presence in various parts of Oriens, federates of various tribal groups in various locations fighting along with the Byzantines for the defense of the empire. These involved such tribes as Tanūkh, Salīh, Kalb, Judām, ʿĀmila, Balqayn, Ṭayy, Bahrāʾ, Taghlib, and Namir. The Greek sources only imply the participation of the federate Arabs when they record reference to the two toponyms, Muʿta and Jābiya, at which battles were fought between the Byzantine forces and the Muslim Arabs.<sup>48</sup> It needed the cataclysm of the Muslim Conquest of Oriens to bring out the fact of active federate presence and participation, both Ghassānid and non-Ghassānid, clearly recorded in the Arabic Muslim sources but vague and obscure in the Greek sources.

c. Within this extensive federate Arab presence, the Ghassānids were dominant in this decade, as they had been in the sixth century. This dominance is reflected at the Yarmūk and elsewhere in the following ways.

i. At the crucial battle, Yarmūk (636), which changed the course of Near Eastern history, the Ghassānids and their king, Jabala, steal the show from the other federates.<sup>49</sup> They do the same at other junctures in the fateful decade of struggle between Islam and Byzantium.

ii. This is also reflected in the prominence given to Jabala in both war and peace. After his role at the battle of the Yarmūk, which he survived, he dominated the scene in negotiations with the New Order of Islam, represented by the caliph Omar,<sup>50</sup> and he remained dominant even in negotiations with the Arabs of Byzantium who opted to settle in Anatolia after the Muslim conquest of Oriens.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 225–35.

<sup>48</sup> For these federates, see *BAFOC*, 397–407. For the toponyms, see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 335, line 21 and p. 337, line 1, where Muʿta appears as Μόθουζ and Jābiya as Γαβιθῶ. The latter appears also in Nikephoros, *Breviarium Historicum*, ed. and trans. Cyril Mango (Washington, D.C., 1990), p. 68, line 27.

<sup>49</sup> When Heraclius dispatched the Byzantine army that was to fight the battle of Yarmūk, he put Jabala at the head of its vanguard, composed of the federate Arabs; see Balādūrī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, I, 160.

<sup>50</sup> On this see "Ghassān post Ghassān," 324.

iii. A measure of the military prestige of the Ghassānids among the Arabs, even the Arabs of Islam during the Medinese period in Muḥammad's life, is expressed by a statement in Ibn Sa'd to the effect that when the future caliph Omar was perturbed in Medina by some news of an impending invasion, he exclaimed: "Has Ghassān come?"<sup>51</sup>

iv. There is evidence that their capital, too, Jābiya, returned to its former position of preeminence. Military engagements were fought around it, and when the caliph Omar came after Yarmūk in order to draw up the broad lines of administering the newly conquered territory, he chose Jābiya as his headquarters. Mu'āwiya also used it as his capital for some twenty years while he was governor of Bilād al-Shām (Oriens), before he transferred the capital to Damascus on becoming caliph. So for twenty years, the capital of the Ghassānids became the capital of Oriens, now Bilād al-Shām, and this can only suggest that in the few years before Mu'āwiya took it over, it had returned to its prosperity and had flourished as the capital of the newly restored Ghassānid *Basileia* and phylarchate.<sup>52</sup>

d. The question arises whether in this period the Ghassānids and the federates in general received the *annona* in kind or in money. The Arabic sources speak of "al-danānīr al-Hiraqliyya," the "Heraclian *dīnārs*," with which they were familiar.<sup>53</sup> These must have begun to appear only in the 630s after the return of the Byzantines to Oriens.<sup>54</sup> It is not impossible that the Ghassānids received their *annona* in these few years in cash. The only references to money involving the Arabs of this period in the Greek sources come in Theophanes and Nicephorus concerning the episode of the Byzantine eunuch at Gaza who denied the Arabs the sum of thirty pounds, a statement that admits of various interpretations, but one of them was that this was the *annona*.<sup>55</sup>

3. Special attention should be given to a precious passage in the Greek sources on the Arab phylarchate in Oriens in this period. Because it is the only one and is specific, it deserves much attention. In the *Acta* of St. Anastasius the Persian, there is a passage that describes the translation of the body of the saint from Persia to Palestine in 631. A monk from the monastery of St. Anastasius in Jerusalem was in charge of the process of translation. In the segment of the road that extends from the Euphrates to Palmyra, he is es-

<sup>51</sup> See Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Beirut, 1958), VIII, 183, 190.

<sup>52</sup> See Jābiya in *El*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. "Djābiya."

<sup>53</sup> See al-Jawālīqī, *al-Mu'arrab*, 277, 349. The Heraclian *dīnār* is further described in the Arabic verse (ibid.) as red in color and full in weight.

<sup>54</sup> On the coins of Heraclius, see Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection*, II.1, pp. 207–383.

<sup>55</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, p. 335, line 23–p. 336, line 3; Patriarch Nikephoros, *Breviarium Historicum*, sec. 20, lines 11–21 (p. 68). In Theophanes the technical term, ὀόγα (*annona*), is used.



corted by a Saracen phylarch in whose *παρεμβολαί*, "camps," he spent some time during his journey from the Euphrates to Palmyra.<sup>56</sup>

a. The first problem that arises is whether or not the term "phylarch" is used in the general sense of a Saracen chief or the technical sense of an Arab chief in treaty relationship to Byzantium. The chances are that the term is used in the latter sense. The phylarch is near Palmyra, and there is mention of the *parembolae*,<sup>57</sup> the *hīras*, or military encampments. It is difficult to believe that an Arab chief established within the *limes* near Palmyra, who had *parembolae* reaching the Euphrates and who appears concerned for the saintly relics, was not a federate. This was a strategically important military area for the defense of Oriens, the area of the *Strata Diocletiana* that had witnessed the encounter between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Mundīr. In 631 when the remains of St. Anastasius passed through the area, it was merely two years after the evacuation of Oriens by the Persians, and such strategic areas would have been safe in the hands not of a desert chief but of a federate phylarch. Thus the *Acta* provide explicit data for the restoration of the Arab phylarchate in Oriens in this period and of the old military stations of the *Limes orientalis*.

b. Unfortunately the hagiographer does not give the name of the phylarch; if he had done so, he would have gifted the student of this period with an invaluable genealogical datum. Was he a Ghassānid, and if so, which Ghassānid was he? In support of the Ghassānid identity of this anonymous phylarch, the following may be adduced.

i. This was a sector of the frontier that was close to Persia, the secular enemy that Byzantium had just defeated and forced to evacuate Oriens. Thus, for strategic reasons, it must have been left in the hands of the *foederati* who had distinguished themselves lately in the Persian war and who had been Byzantium's powerful allies in the sixth and seventh centuries, the Ghassānids.

ii. This was traditionally the sector that the Ghassānids had protected directly. A passage in Procopius that treats the events of 539 discussed the antecedents of the second Persian war of Justinian's reign, one of which was the *Strata* dispute between Arethas the Ghassānid and Mundīr the Lakhmid.<sup>58</sup> It is clear from the passage that the Ghassānids were in charge of that sector

<sup>56</sup> See H. K. Usener, *Acta M. Anastasii Persae* (Bonn, 1894), p. 13, lines 31–38, left column. For the passage and its relevance to the ecclesiastical history of the Ghassānids, see *BASIC* I.2, 945–47.

<sup>57</sup> On the *parembolai* as a term for the military camps of the Arab *foederati* (their *hīras*), see *BAFIC*, 212–13. On the phylarchs of the Palestinian *Parembolae*, see *ibid.*, 181–91. The use of the plural, *parembolai* (camps), is noteworthy. It clearly indicates a series of federate camps from the Euphrates to Palmyra; for this and related problems, see *BASIC* II.

<sup>58</sup> On the *Strata* dispute, see above, 209–18.

near Palmyra, and this must have continued throughout the sixth century. On the return of the Ghassānids from Anatolia after the Byzantine victory at the battle of Nineveh, it is natural to suppose that they were reassigned to that sector of the frontier that they had previously defended.

iii. On the road from the Euphrates to Palmyra lay Sergiopolis, the holy city of St. Sergius. A previous section<sup>59</sup> has discussed the special devotion the Arabs had for this saint, and this was especially true of the Ghassānids. It is therefore natural to suppose that Byzantium, which had just emerged victorious from a war with Persia, conducted as a holy war against the fire-worshippers, would have assigned this sector to the Ghassānids, who had protected the cities of the limitrophe including Sergiopolis, which lay in the midst of the *barbarikon pedion*, from the raids which threatened it.

iv. Finally, data from Ḥamza al-İṣfahānī, that important source for the history of the Ghassānids, may be laid under contribution in support of the phylarch's Ghassānid identity and possibly his name. In his well-known list of Ghassānid kings, there are six names that recall Jabala, the last Ghassānid king in Oriens. In the sources, he is called Jabala and his patronymic is ibn-al-Ayham. Although Ḥamza gives his correct name as the last Ghassānid king, he does mention, as the fifth Ghassānid king before him, a certain al-Ayham ibn-Jabala and gives the relevant information that his seat was Tadmur (Palmyra).<sup>60</sup> As the list in Ḥamza is often confused, it is possible that this datum does belong to Jabala ibn-al-Ayham rather than al-Ayham ibn-Jabala. Moreover, he gives a reign of some twenty-seven years, which is possible for Jabala who may have started as a phylarch in the reign of Phocas in 609.

It would be remarkable indeed if this phylarch turned out to be the famous Jabala, the last Ghassānid king. But it is too good to be true. What is practically certain is that the phylarch was a federate phylarch, and it is more than probable that he was also a Ghassānid.<sup>61</sup>

#### IV. SARACEN POCKETS IN PALAESTINA PRIMA

The convulsions through which Palaestina Prima must have gone in the last days of Byzantium in the Holy Land before the Muslim Conquest raises the question of what Arab pockets there were in the country on the eve of the

<sup>59</sup> See above, 501–5; and also *BASIC* I.2, 949–63.

<sup>60</sup> Ḥamza, *Tārīkh* (Beirut, 1961), 103.

<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy that a year or so before the translation of the relics of St. Anastasius, Oriens witnessed the translation of the Cross from its Babylonian Captivity in Persia to Jerusalem by the emperor himself, Heraclius. The event reverberated in Christendom, and it is still celebrated in the Christian Orient. This could easily have been a precedent that might have inspired a Christian Ghassānid phylarch to engage in a similar act of piety, albeit on much smaller scale—escorting the relics of a Christian saint along a segment of a route that also began in Persia and ended in Jerusalem.

Conquest and what role they played, if any, during the conquest of Palestine. Something has been said on this problem in the section on Palestine during the Persian invasion and occupation. Other sections in this volume have also treated the Kindite presence and that of the phylarchs of the Parembolē. What happened to all these groups?

### The Parembolē

The fortunes of the phylarchs of the Parembolē in the Desert of Judā in Palestine have been traced until the middle of the sixth century in the preceding volume in this series.<sup>62</sup> Around that time, one of them, Terebon II, was obviously flourishing since he was the informant of Cyril of Scythopolis on the history of his house, the house of Aspebetos, the bishop-phylarch of the reign of Theodosius II in the fifth century. After a warm endorsement of Terebon II by Cyril who describes him as "the renowned phylarch in this region" (ὁ κατὰ τὴν χώραν ταύτην περιβόητος τῶν Σαρακηνῶν φύλαρχος),<sup>63</sup> the sources fall silent on the Parembolē and its phylarchs. How should one account for that silence? Should it be construed as the disappearance of the Parembolē and its phylarchs for the eighty years or so that intervened between this last reference to Terebon II and the Muslim Conquest of Palestine in the 630s?

In view of the fact that Cyril refers to Terebon II in such positive terms, it is difficult to say that the phylarchate of the Parembolē disappeared in this intervening period. It had maintained in the Desert of Judā a strong phylarchal-episcopal presence for more than a century, and no reason can be suggested for its disappearance. The emergence of the powerful Ghassānid shield around 530 protected Oriens and the *limes*, but this could not have made the Parembolē phylarchs redundant since Palestine had a special position in the thinking of both the *imperium* and the *ecclesia*. Its desert regions in the south called for the maintenance of a defense unit such as that provided by the phylarchal Parembolē; besides, it was orthodox, untouched by Monophysitism, the confession to which the Ghassānid phylarchs belonged. The simplest explanation for the silence of the sources is that they had no historian after Cyril. The various phases in the history of the Parembolē in the eighty years that came to an end with the Muslim Conquest may be presented as follows.

1. The thirty years or so from the middle of the century until the exile of Mundir and the revolt of the Ghassānid Nu'mān must have been a quiet period in the Desert of Judā and hence for the Parembolē. The strong protection that the Ghassānids in this period provided to the whole of the *limes* from

<sup>62</sup> For the phylarchs of the Parembolē in Palestine, see *BAFIC*, 181–91, 202–7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

the pastoralists of the Arabian Peninsula must have relegated them to a certain obscurity, reflected in the silence of the sources.

2. In the 580s there is reference to the Desert of Juda being disturbed by Saracens.<sup>64</sup> The source is John Moschus who relates episodes involving the Saracens and how they still constituted a menace to the monks and monasteries of the region. In one of these episodes, there is an express reference to the revolt of the Ghassānid Nuʿmān, to which the writer dates the episode. The reference is strictly a matter of concurrence and does not imply that the Ghassānid Nuʿmān carried his raids into Palaestina Prima. All three episodes are isolated, insignificant ones, not a general offensive mounted by Saracens against the region, as in the early part of the sixth century. Hence the silence of an author such as John Moschus is understandable on the phylarchs of the Parembole.

3. The next series of events that might have involved these phylarchs was the revolt of the house of Heraclius against Phocas and the operations of his cousin Nicetas from Egypt against the imperial forces in Palestine. This has been examined for the reign of Phocas,<sup>65</sup> but there is no explicit reference to the Parembole.

4. The same may be said of the period of the Persian conquest and occupation of Oriens. There is that reference to the Byzantine troops stationed in Jericho and their involvement in the defense of Jerusalem during the Persian siege of 614, but there is no reference to the Parembole.<sup>66</sup> Again it is not surprising, since the accounts of the Persian advance and occupation are so scanty. It is safe to assume that the phylarchs of the Parembole could not withstand the Persian advance, and so they must have been crushed or moved elsewhere.

5. What happened to them after the withdrawal of the Persian occupying force from Oriens in 629 is neither known nor recorded. The presumption is that they continued to exist until the Muslim Conquest, after which they disappear from history and the sources.

The phylarchs of the Parembole constituted a small but attractive Arab

<sup>64</sup> For all these references, see above, 597–99. For the latest work on the monasteries of the Desert of Juda, see Y. Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven, 1992).

<sup>65</sup> On this see above, 635–37, and *BASIC* I.2, 935, 940.

<sup>66</sup> For this reference, see *Expugnationis Hierosolymae A.D. 614. Recensiones arabicae*, ed. and trans. G. Garitte, CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, vols. 340–41, 347–48. The reference to Jericho appears in the four Arabic manuscripts; for one of them see textus, vol. 340, pp. 10, 14, where the author, Strategius, says that the patriarch of Jerusalem invoked the help of the Roman soldiers stationed in Jericho through Modestus, the abbot of Dayr al-Dawākis, against the Persian besiegers of Jerusalem and that, when they saw themselves hopelessly outnumbered by the Persians, they fled. For the Latin version, see vol. 341, p. 7, line 10.

military pocket in the region. They were distinguished from the Ghassānids by being an orthodox enclave within a predominantly Monophysite federate presence in Oriens, presided over by the Ghassānids. Unlike these, they were of purely local importance, a small force whose primary duty was not the defense of the *limes* but of the monastic establishment in the Jordan Valley and the Desert of Juda. Even within the defense system of Palestine, the Kindites, whom Justinian installed in Palestine around 530, must have been more powerful than they. There is some irony in the way that these phylarchs made their exit from the annals of Arab-Byzantine relations. They had fled Persia in the reign of Theodosius II, and it was the Persians who some two hundred years later appeared in Palestine and probably gave short shrift to their existence.

#### Caesarea

The Kindites were established in Palestine by Justinian around 530 after their chief Qays arrived there and received the *hēgemonia*. The last possible mention of the Kindites in Palestine was in the early 540s, when Cyril of Scythopolis described the strife between one of them, al-Aswad, and the Ghassānid Arethas.

The fortunes of the Kindites in Oriens are thus shrouded in obscurity after that date, especially the enclave in Palestine. It is possible that after the encounter with the Ghassānid Arethas, that enclave may have been eliminated. Yet there is a tantalizing reference in the Arab Islamic historian al-Balāḍurī, that when Mu'āwiya, the Umayyad governor of Bilād al-Shām (Oriens), finally captured Caesarea Maritima in 641 after a long siege, he found a number of Arabs in the city.<sup>67</sup> These may have been either Rhomaic or federate Arabs, possibly Kindite, who moved to the city during the Persian occupation. Their presence is a relevant datum for the fall of the city into the hands of Mu'āwiya.

#### Dayr Ghassāneh

Balāḍurī adds the detail that among the Arabs of Caesarea there was a lady by the name of Sha'ṭhā', whom Ḥassān, the court poet of the Ghassānids, mentions in his poetry.<sup>68</sup> If Balāḍurī is correct in bringing together the poetry of Ḥassān with this lady, it could tip the scales in favor of these Arabs as federates whom Ḥassān knew as the poet of the federate Ghassānids. But it

<sup>67</sup> See Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, I, 168. For the latest on the last days of Byzantine Caesarea, see K. Holum, "Archaeological Evidence for the Fall of Byzantine Caesarea," *BASOR* 286 (1992), 73–85.

<sup>68</sup> Balāḍurī, *op. cit.*, I, 168.

raises also another question, namely, the relation of the Ghassānids to Palæstina Prima, in which they had little or no presence. Yet there is a toponym that has survived into the twentieth century by the name of Dayr Ghassāneh, and this could point to a Ghassānid presence. Dayr Ghassāneh lies some thirty kilometers northwest of Jerusalem. It was visited by W. F. Albright during his exploratory journey in Palestine in 1923. On the strength of pottery remains from the Byzantine period, he concluded that Dayr Ghassāneh, which he did associate with the Ghassānids, "was a village of some size" during that period. He also identified the adjacent Khirbet Balāṭah with biblical Zeredah, the home of Jereboam I.<sup>69</sup>

The fact that the Ghassānids were Monophysite and that Palestine was solidly Dyophysite does not of course entirely preclude a little Ghassānid enclave in the Holy Land. Besides, there were some Dyophysite Ghassānids, who were a very small minority. So they may have constructed this *dayr* (monastery) in the Holy Land to which, as Christians, they were devoted. It is interesting to note that this Dayr Ghassāneh, together with other Christian shrines, is venerated by Muslims. This is a common phenomenon in the Near East where Muslims venerate Jewish and Christian figures, some that are mentioned in the Koran and some that are not.<sup>70</sup>

#### Karāwā Banī Ghassān

A map of Mamlūk Palestine reveals a locality, Karāwā Banī Ghassān, south of Nablus (Neapolis), which could suggest a Ghassānid presence.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> See his "Archaeological and Topographical Explorations in Palestine and Syria," *BASOR* 49 (1933), 23–25.

<sup>70</sup> For Dayr Ghassāneh, see T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London, 1927), 18, 53, 55, 251, 286, 303–4, where it is "Dêr Ghassāneh," now, of course, not a monastery but a village.

Reference to Dayr Ghassāneh brings to mind the village of Bethabudisōn, mentioned by Cyril, wherein an Arab and his wife lived. It was suggested in the preceding volume that the name of the village (which still exists) is Arab (*BAFIC*, 202). The *Bêth* and *Abū* are Arabic, but it is not clear what the "Disōn" is, and it does not sound Arabic, although there are roots, such as D-Y-S that might, farfetchedly, account for it. It is also possible to syllabize the toponym differently as "Bêth-'Abbūd," "the House of the Worshiper," with a Greek *sigma* added to it, and there is in the region the present-day village of 'Ābūd. On the other hand, it could be some mutilated non-Arab word. It is interesting to note that, in modern times, the village Abū Dis is associated with two caves inhabited by Jinn, according to the local population. They are called Mghārit Abū Farḥ and Mghārit el-Badd; see Canaan, *op. cit.*, 45. The same author speaks of a saint by the name of Abū 'Arqūb (*ibid.*, 288) whom he locates at Durah, *ibid.*, 282. The name is uncommon and brings to mind the Christian Arab from Lazarion of the 6th century, 'Urqūb.

<sup>71</sup> See *Atlas of Israel* (Jerusalem-Amsterdam, 1970), map IX/11. I have been unable to find anything on this locality in the sources but hope to discuss it in *BASIC II* after visiting the area (see Addenda et Corrigena).



## Lazarium

In the previous volume of this series,<sup>72</sup> a few Saracens were noted as living near Jerusalem in Lazarium in the period 543–553. Two of them were named ʿUrqūb and Thaʿlaba, and there was an anonymous Saracen woman associated with the village of Bēthabūdīs. It was suggested that perhaps Lazarium had a small Christian Arab colony which these few individuals represented.

The knowledge of these Saracens and this small colony is owed entirely to Cyril, a monk who was born at Scythopolis and who was naturally interested in the history of that region. John Moschus, who came to Palestine later in the sixth century, was a Cilician with no such interest, and so his notice of the situation in the Desert of Juda lacks the specificity that characterized Cyril's account. Hence the sources are silent on the fortunes of the Saracens after Cyril, with only vague references occurring in the *Pratum Spirituale* of John Moschus.

It is for this reason that a statement in one of the minor Syriac chronicles of the thirteenth century is startling for its specificity when it gives an account of 638, the year that Jerusalem capitulated to the armies of Islam and that Caliph Omar visited the city to accept its surrender from its patriarch, Sophronius.<sup>73</sup> The *Chronicle* relates that the leaders of Jerusalem came out to meet Omar, and it specifies two: an Arab named Abū Juʿaydid and Sophronius, the patriarch. The two negotiated with Omar the terms of the capitulation, and took the oath for the whole of Palestine. The covenant was written down, and all the parties endorsed it.

The passage in the *Chronicle* reads as follows in the Latin version: "Et cum pervenisset ad urbem, eum adierunt principes civitatis: inter eos unus fuit, quem Abu Guaidadam appellant Arabes, alter Sophronius episcopus. Et sanxerunt pacta et iuramenta; et scripsit eis diploma, sicut petierunt, pro ecclesiis et pro legibus eorum; et pro universa Palaestina acceperunt fidem et iuramenta, et etiam ne remaneat ullus iudaeus Hierosolymis. Et postquam scriptum et eis missum fuit diploma, rex Omarus ingressus est Ierusalem."<sup>74</sup>

The passage in the Syriac *Chronicle* is remarkable for the information it provides, and so it repays careful scrutiny.

1. The first problem that the text presents is the name of the Arab<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> See *BAFIC*, 200–202 and notes.

<sup>73</sup> *Chronicon Anonymum ad Annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, ed. J. B. Chabot, textus, p. 255; versio, p. 199. The two other sources that relate this memorable event of the capitulation of Jerusalem and the encounter of Omar and Sophronius, namely, Theophanes and Michael the Syrian, do not mention the Arab involvement. So it is this Syriac chronicle, later than Michael by a half century, that has preserved this precious information.

<sup>74</sup> *Chronicon*, versio, p. 199, lines 22–29; textus, p. 255, lines 3–11.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, line 5.

who, together with Sophronius, negotiated the terms of the covenant. It is a tectonymic, sure sign that he was an Arab. But the second part of the tectonymic is not clear at all. The editor thought it should read "Guaida," but it can be variously read depending on how one treats the diacritical marks and the letters which lend themselves to confusion.<sup>76</sup>

2. The account gives prominence to this Arab, since of all the leaders of the Jerusalem community that went out to meet Omar, he is the only one mentioned together with the patriarch, Sophronius, called a bishop in the *Chronicle*.

3. Although he may have been a prominent member of the Christian community in Jerusalem, it was probably because of his Arab origin that he was singled out for distinction in this context. Sophronius was to negotiate the capitulation of the Holy City to an Arab, Caliph Omar. It made sense to take along one who was an Arab and thus could help make the capitulation process go smoothly.

4. Perhaps the most important element in the process was the language of the covenant and the place of the Arab Jerusalemite leader in it. The *Chronicle* states that Omar wrote the covenant. Whether he did it personally or through someone else in his army is irrelevant. What is relevant is that there was, of course, the Arabic text of the covenant. Sophronius was no Arabic scholar, and it is here, in this context, that the Arab leader comes. He must have been the one who interpreted the Arabic text to Sophronius and possibly wrote its Greek version.

The transaction is important for the question of the use of Arabic in Palestine among the Christian Arab community. The Arab leader or someone else among them translated it into Greek for Sophronius. Hence the process of translation that involves the two languages, Greek and Arabic, is of obvious relevance for those who wish to pursue the question of the existence of an Arabic liturgy or lectionary in pre-Islamic times.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> The correct transliteration of the Syriac is "Abū Ju'aydid." The editor suggested that the name be read "Guaidus." The root must certainly be J'D, which primarily means "curly," as a description of hair, and its diminutive is Ju'-ayd. The double *d* at the end presents a problem, since it is unnatural and is therefore likely to be a dittograph. Most probably the name is Abū Ju'ayd, since the Arabic onomasticon has the name Ja'd and Ja'dī. There is the clan of Banū Ja'da from the tribe of 'Āmir to whom belongs the famous poet al-Nābigha al-Ja'dī of this period. It should be mentioned that Abū Ja'd or Ju'd is a nickname for the wolf. Abū Ju'ayd is not unknown to the Arabic sources (see 'Abbās, *Tārīkh Bilād al-Shām*, 264), as is the name Ju'ayd (*ibid.*, 252).

<sup>77</sup> The covenant of Omar for Jerusalem must be the earliest Arabic text written in Palestine that is extant, even though it may have experienced additions and gone through various editions. Doubts have been cast on its authenticity; see A. S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and Their Non-Muslim Subjects* (London, 1930; repr. 1970), esp. p. 10. But it is impossible to believe that there was no covenant attending the capitulation of Jerusalem. Covenants for many other cities

This precious passage in the Syriac *Chronicle* makes possible a return to the question of an Arab community in Palaestina Prima in this period. The silence of the sources has been broken by this reference to this leader<sup>78</sup> in 638. The natural presumption is that a small Arab community did exist in this region, and it may be related to those Arabs noted in the preceding century, 'Urqūb and Tha'laba. So presumably the few Arabs that lived around the Holy City as Christians did survive until the Muslim Conquest of Jerusalem<sup>79</sup> in 638.

## V. APPENDIX

### The Saracens in the *Acta* of St. Anastasius

The work of Bernard Flusin on St. Anastasius the Persian became available after the manuscript of *BASIC* was finished and was ready to go to press. All students of the reign of Heraclius and the history of Palestine in this period, both secular and ecclesiastical, should be thankful to the author for these two impressive volumes.<sup>1</sup>

As the passage that spoke of the Arab phylarch's escorting of the remains of St. Anastasius from the Euphrates to Palmyra was analyzed in this volume, it is necessary to examine Flusin's rendition of the passage and his commentary on it.

Of the brother who brought the remains from Persia and who was entrusted to the Saracen phylarch, the author's French version reads "qui était resté longtemps avec eux dans leur campements,"<sup>2</sup> the verb translating *χρονίσαντα*.

The Greek verb *χρονίζω* can mean to "tarry, linger," but it can also mean "to spend time" without the implication of lingering. The brother and the Saracen escort journeyed from the Euphrates to Palmyra; since it is a long way and, what is more, a

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are attested. Of all the cities of Oriens, Jerusalem had a special significance to Muslims, the *terminus* of the *isrā'*, the spot whence the *mi'rāj* started, and the first of the two *qiblas*. The caliph Omar came himself from Medina to preside over the negotiations for its capitulation. Surely there was some document finalizing the capitulation and one that was intelligible to Omar, that is, in Arabic. For the latest defense of the authenticity of the covenant, see 'Abbās, *op. cit.*, 264–66.

<sup>78</sup> Abū Ju'ayd would thus be the earliest Arab inhabitant of Jerusalem whose name has been preserved. He appears as a Christian, siding with Sophronius and negotiating for the security of the Holy City and its churches. Christianity had transformed the Arabs from raiding Saracens into believing Christians, a far cry from the first attested Arabs associated with Jerusalem, such as Geshem (Jusham), the chief who tried to prevent Nehemiah from rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

<sup>79</sup> The presence of such Arab figures as Abū Ju'ayd in Jerusalem provides a background for the examination of a reference in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poet, al-A'shā, to Jerusalem (Ūrshalim), which he says he visited. If there was a small Christian Arab community in Jerusalem about this time, A'shā could have visited it and stayed with some of its members. So also Ḥassān, the court poet of the Ghassānids, could have visited Caesarea where he knew the lady Sha'thā'; see above, note 68. On A'shā and Jerusalem, see *Dīwān al-A'shā al-Kabīr*, ed. M. Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1950), p. 13, verse 56.

<sup>1</sup> See B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 104.

desert area, it is natural for the party to spend a long time in traversing the distance.<sup>3</sup> They probably traveled by night and slept during the day to avoid the heat and the scorching sun.

Perhaps the point in emphasizing "lingering, tarrying," rather than "spending time," is related to the author's attempt to work out the chronology of the return of the relics referred to in the note that goes with this passage.<sup>4</sup> In the same note the author says "peut-être le *Retour des reliques* ne nous dit-il pas tout ses tribulations." The implication of the statement is not clear. If it implies that his journey with the Saracen party was not comfortable because of bad treatment, this cannot be accepted.

In another note, the author speaks of the Saracens to whom the phylarch belonged as Christian Arabs, which must, of course, be true.<sup>5</sup> But in the commentary, he conceives of the Saracen party as a caravan whose leader, the phylarch, evinced no great zeal in performing his escort service.<sup>6</sup>

As has been argued previously in this volume, the Saracens in this case could not have been nomads or tribes who roamed the region. They were federate Saracens, allied to the Romans, and their chief who escorted the remains was a phylarch in the technical sense—an Arab officer in the Byzantine federate system, who was in charge of this strategic area. So were the *parembolai* mentioned in the same passage; they were not the tents of nomads but the military encampments of the Arab *foederati* of the region over which and over whom presided the phylarch. There was, thus, no question of lack of zeal in escorting the remains of the saint on the part of the Saracen party as the author states: "ce qu'il font sans zèle excessif." The Arab federates of Byzantium in this century, and particularly those encamped in this region, were zealous Christians who guarded the shrine of St. Sergius at Ruṣāfa and whose Christian enthusiasm has been discussed in various chapters of this volume.

The brother who brought with him the remains of St. Anastasius may have spent a long time traversing the Syrian desert and may have experienced some tribulations caused by climate and terrain. The Saracens who escorted the remains of the saint belonged to the same group of allied Saracens whom Heraclius cited in his bulletin after the victory of Nineveh, and there is nothing in the Greek text to suggest that they were responsible for any delays or lack of zeal in the discharge of their escort duty.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 319 note 99.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 104 note 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 103 note 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 322 and note 115.



## Lists and Stemmata

### THE BYZANTINE EMPERORS

Anastasius I (491–518)	Tiberius I (578–582)
Justin I (518–527)	Maurice (582–602)
Justinian I (527–565)	Phocas (602–610)
Justin II (565–578)	Heraclius (610–641)

### THE PERSIAN KINGS

Kawad I (488–531)	Shahrbarāz (630)
Chosroes I (531–579)	Boran (630/631)
Hormisdas IV (579–590)	Azarmidukht (630/632)
Bahrām Chūbīn (usurper) (590–591)	Hormisdas V (630/632)
Chosroes II Parviz (590–628)	Mihr-Chosroes (631)
Kawad II (Siroes) (628)	Chosroes III (631–632)
Ardashir III (628–630)	Yazdgard III (632–651)

### MAGISTRI MILITUM PER ORIENTEM

Ioannes Scytha (483–498)	Belisarius (ca. 549–551)
Fl. Areobindus	Amantius (555)
Dagalaiphus (503–504 [?–505])	Valerianus (556)
Pharesmanes (505–506)	Zemarchus (569)
Urbicius Barbatus	Marcianus (572–573)
Fl. Hypatius (?516–?518)	Theodorus (573)
Diogenianus (?518–?520)	Eusebius (573–) 574
Fl. Hypatius (520–525/526)	Justinianus (574/575–577)
Libelarius (527)	Mauricius (577–582)
Fl. Hypatius (527–529)	Ioannes (582–583)
Belisarius (529–531)	Philippicus (584–587/588)
Mundus (531)	Priscus (588 spring)
Belisarius (?532) (533–542)	Philippicus (588–589)
Buzes 540 (–?542)	Comentiolus (589–591)
Martinus (543–544 [?–549])	Narses (591–603)
	Domniziolus (604–605)



## MAGISTRI MILITUM PER ORIENTEM (Cont.)

Cottanas (609)	Priscus (611–612)
Comentiolus (610)	Philippicus (612–614)
Isaacius (before 625/626)	Theodorus (634–636)

This list of *magistri militum* is based on *PLRE* II, 1291 and *PLRE* III.B, 1499–1500.

FAMILIES OF DIPLOMATS  
IN THE  
SERVICE OF BYZANTIUM AND PERSIA

- I -

Byzantium

The House of Nonnosus

Euphrasius

|

Abraham

|

Nonnosus

- II -

Persia

The House of Ayyūb

Ayyūb

|

Zayd

|

Ḥammād

|

Zayd

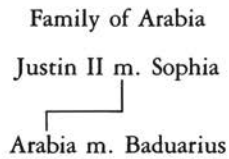
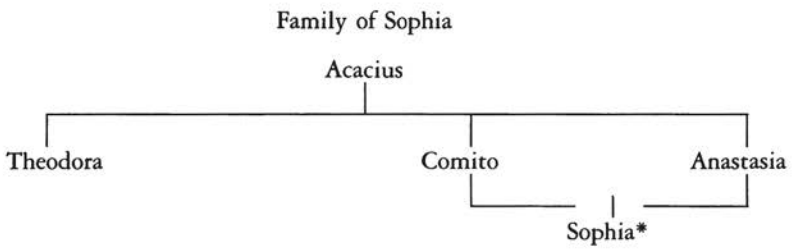
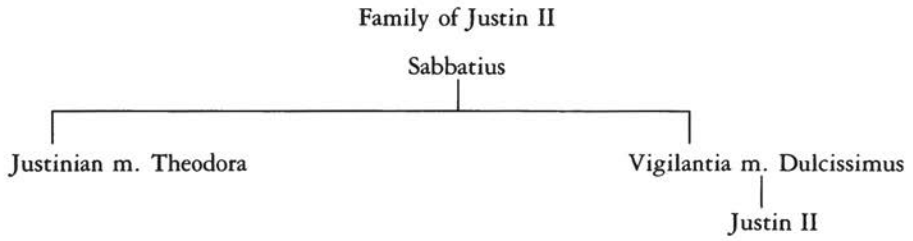
|

‘Adī

|

Zayd

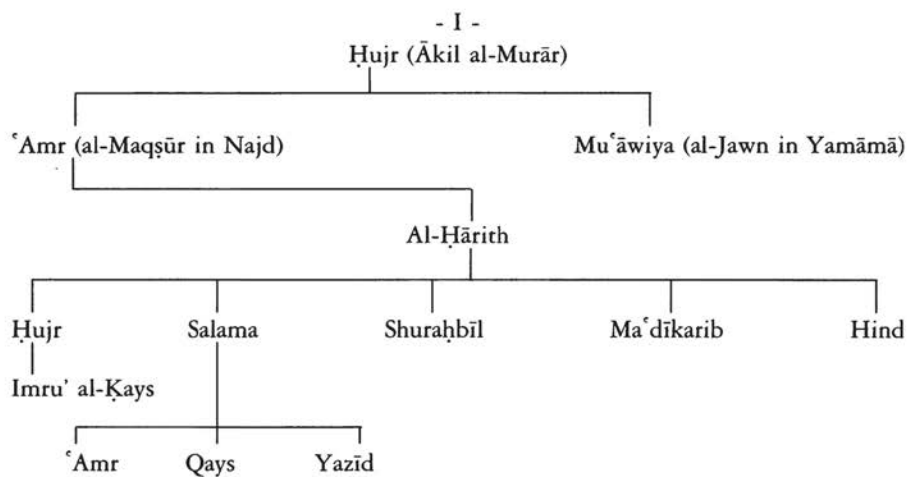
## THE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS OF ARABIA



\*It is not clear whether Sophia was the daughter of Comito or Anastasia.



## THE KINDITE DYNASTY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY



In addition to the federate phylarchs, the table includes the princess, Hind, who married the Lakhmid king, Muṇḍir III of Ḥīra. Also included are her father, Arethas, her grandfather, ʿAmr, her great-grandfather, Ḥujr, all mentioned in her inscription at Dayr Hind in Ḥīra.

## - II -

## Kindite Phylarchs

1. Aswad: probably Kindite, 502/3
2. Chabus (Kaʿb): 536
3. Yazīd: 536

## - III -

## Other Federate Phylarchs

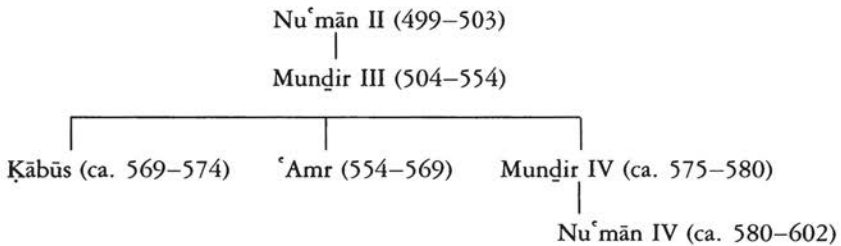
1. Terebon II of the Palestinian Parembolē: ca. 550
2. Ḍujʿum (Zokomos), Salīḥid: ca. 586

## FEDERATE TRIBES OF THE INNER AND THE OUTER SHIELDS

- |            |            |              |
|------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. Ghassān | 6. ʿĀmila  | 11. Taghlib  |
| 2. Kinda   | 7. Balqayn | 12. Iyād     |
| 3. Tanūkh  | 8. Bahrāʾ  | 13. Al-Namir |
| 4. Salīḥ   | 9. Kalb    | 14. Ṭayy     |
| 5. Juḏām   | 10. Balī   | 15. ʿUḏra    |

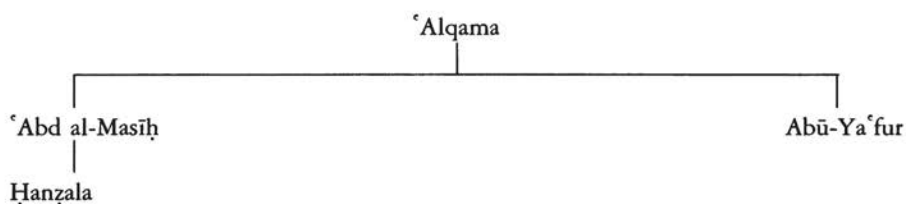
In addition to Ghassān, Salīḥ, Tanūkh, Kinda, and ʿUḏra, all of which have been discussed in *BAFOC*, *BAFIC*, and this volume of *BASIC*, there were these other tribes, members of the Inner and Outer Shields within and without the *limes*, knowledge of whose Byzantine connection is entirely owed to the Arabic sources. They will be discussed in *BASIC* II.

## THE LAKHMID DYNASTY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY



There were three *interregna* in sixth-century Ḥīra: that of Abū-Yaʿfur (ca. 503-504), who was a Lakhmid but did not belong to the House of Naṣr, to which the kings of Ḥīra belonged; that of Kinda in the twenties; and that of Suhrāb, a Persian officer ca. 574-5. After the death of Nu'mān III, an Arab chief, from the Christian tribe of Ṭayyiʾ ruled Ḥīra ca. 602-610. From the marriage of Muḏir III to Hind, the Kindite princess, ʿAmr was born, who succeeded Muḏir, his father, in 554 and was known not by his patronymic but by his matronymic, "son of Hind." For the family of Abū-Yaʿfur, see the next stemma.

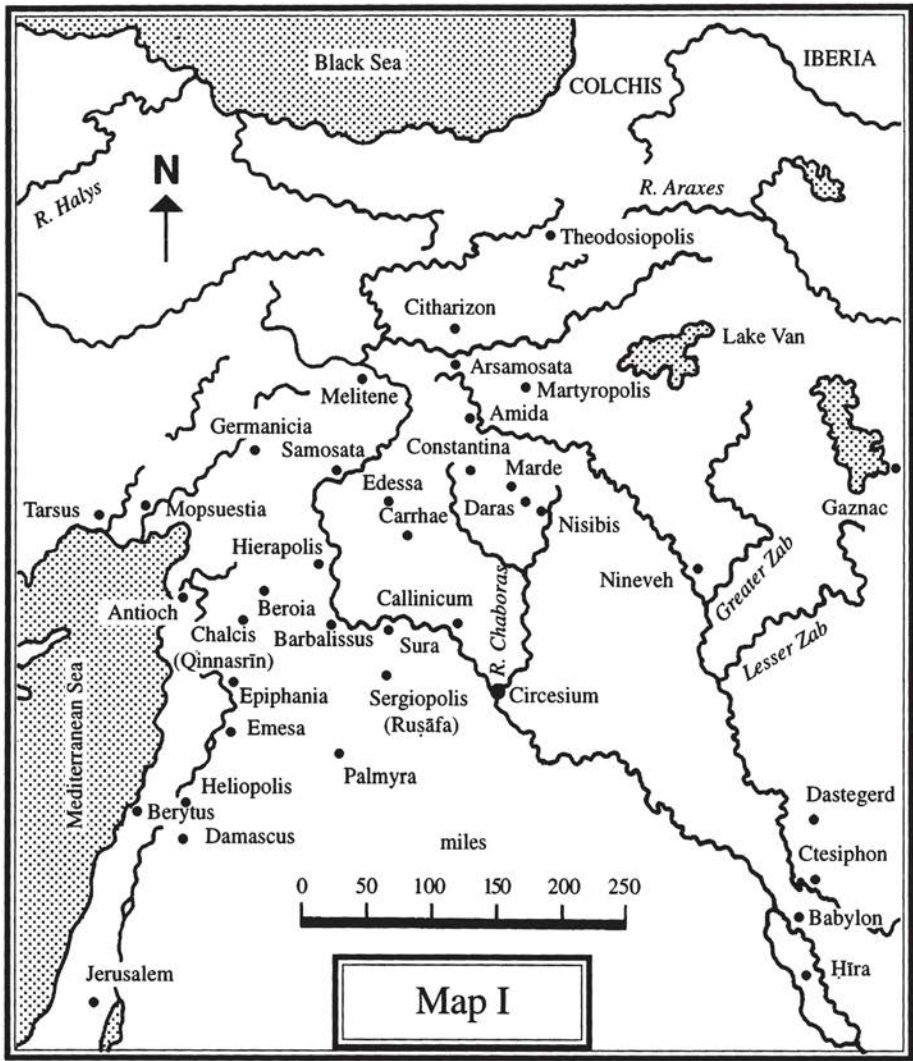
## THE HOUSE OF ABŪ-YAʿFUR



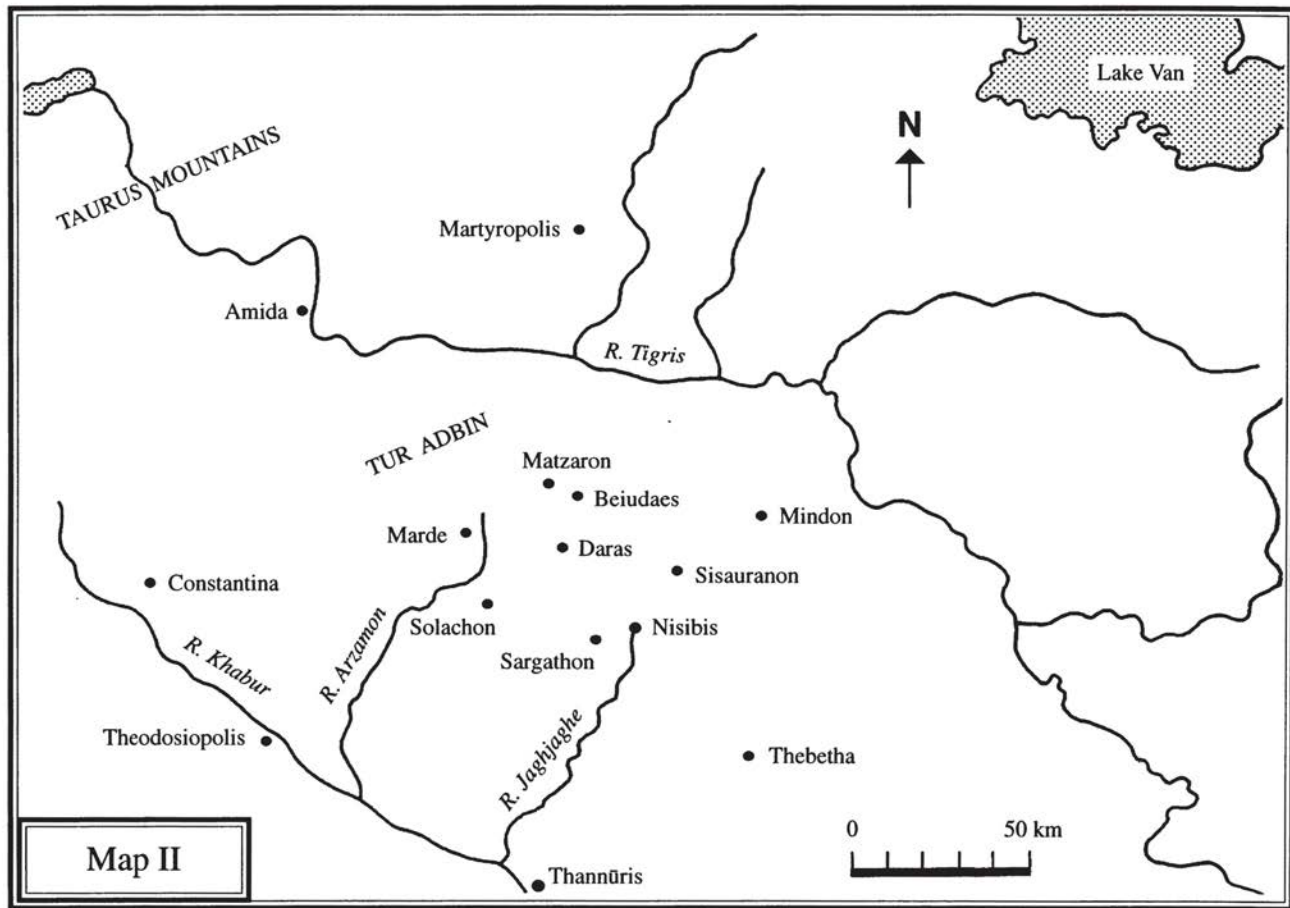
This is the Lakhmid clan related to the dynasts of Ḥīra but not descended from Naṣr, the eponym of the ruling Lakhmid dynasty, sometimes called Banū Naṣr, the Naṣrids. The House of Abū-Yaʿfur was distinguished from the Naṣrids by its Christianity, and two of them, ʿAlqama and Ḥanzala, built monasteries in Ḥīra, which Abū-Yaʿfur ruled for a year or so, ca. 503–4, and it was to him that Philoxenus of Mabboug wrote his letter.



Map I illustrates the Persian wars in which the Arab federates actively participated from the reign of Anastasius to that of Heraclius.



Map II represents upper Mesopotamia with toponyms associated with the Arab federates in the campaigns of 528, 586, and 587, such as Beiüdaes, Marde, Matzaron, Mindon, and Thannūris (adapted from Michael Whitby, *The Emperor Maurice and His Historian*, map 12).



Map III illustrates the campaign of 580 conducted by the *magister militum* Maurice, and the Ghassānid king Muṅdir, against Ctesiphon, involving such frontier fortress-towns along the Euphrates as Callinicum, Circesium, ʿĀnat, and Anbār.



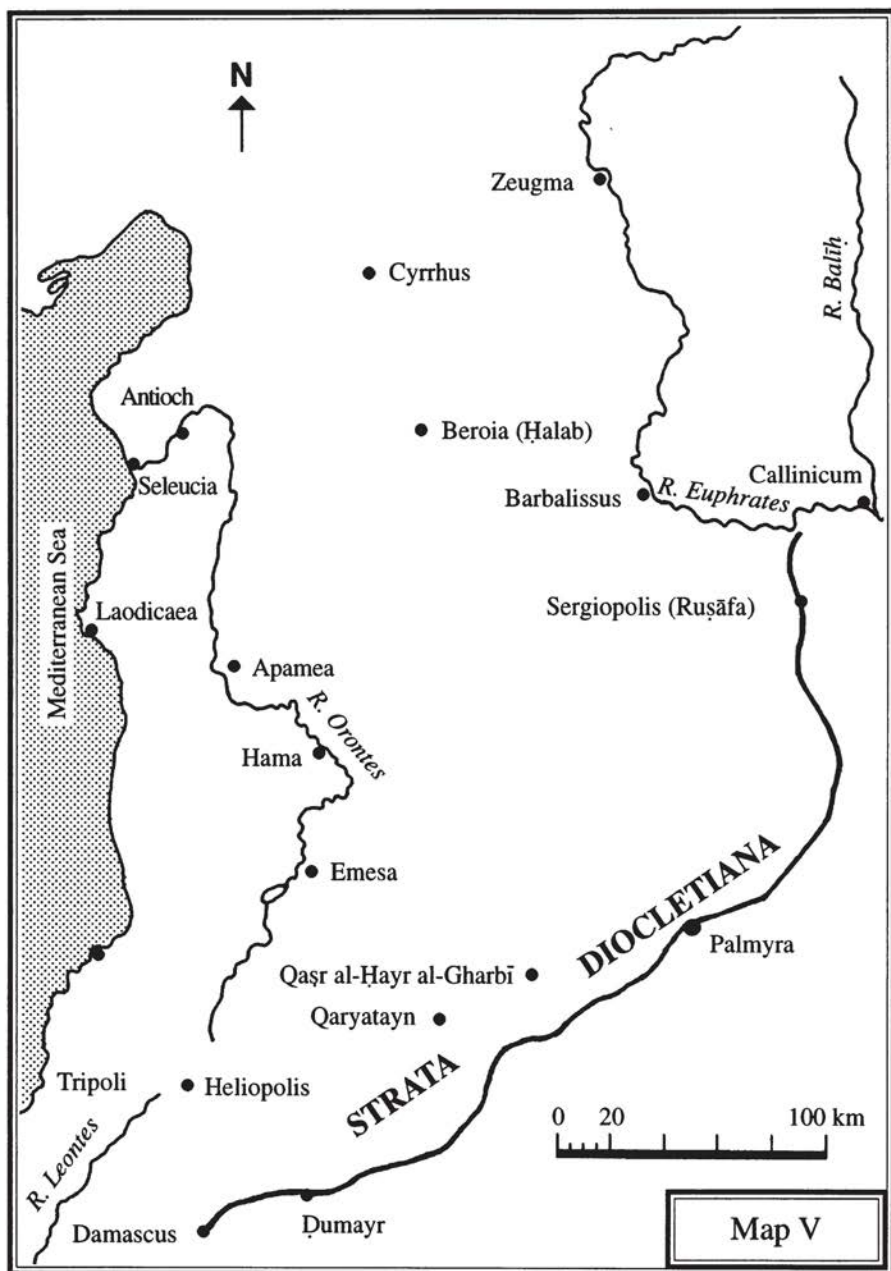


Map IV comprises the provinces of Euphratensis, the two Syrias, and the two Phoenicias in Cis-Euphratesian Oriens, provinces that were exposed to the offensives of the Lakhmid king Muḏir. The map shows also toponyms associated with the Ghassānids, such as Chalcis and Ḥuwwārīn (Evaria).



Map IV

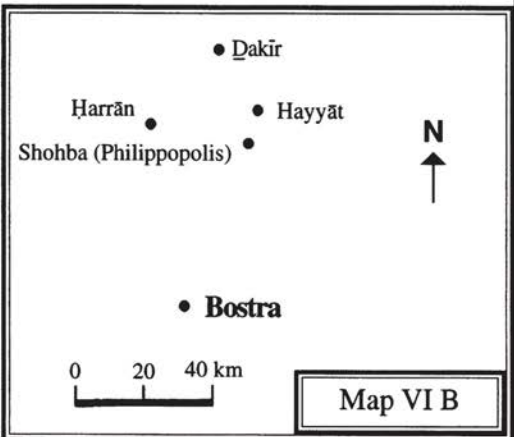
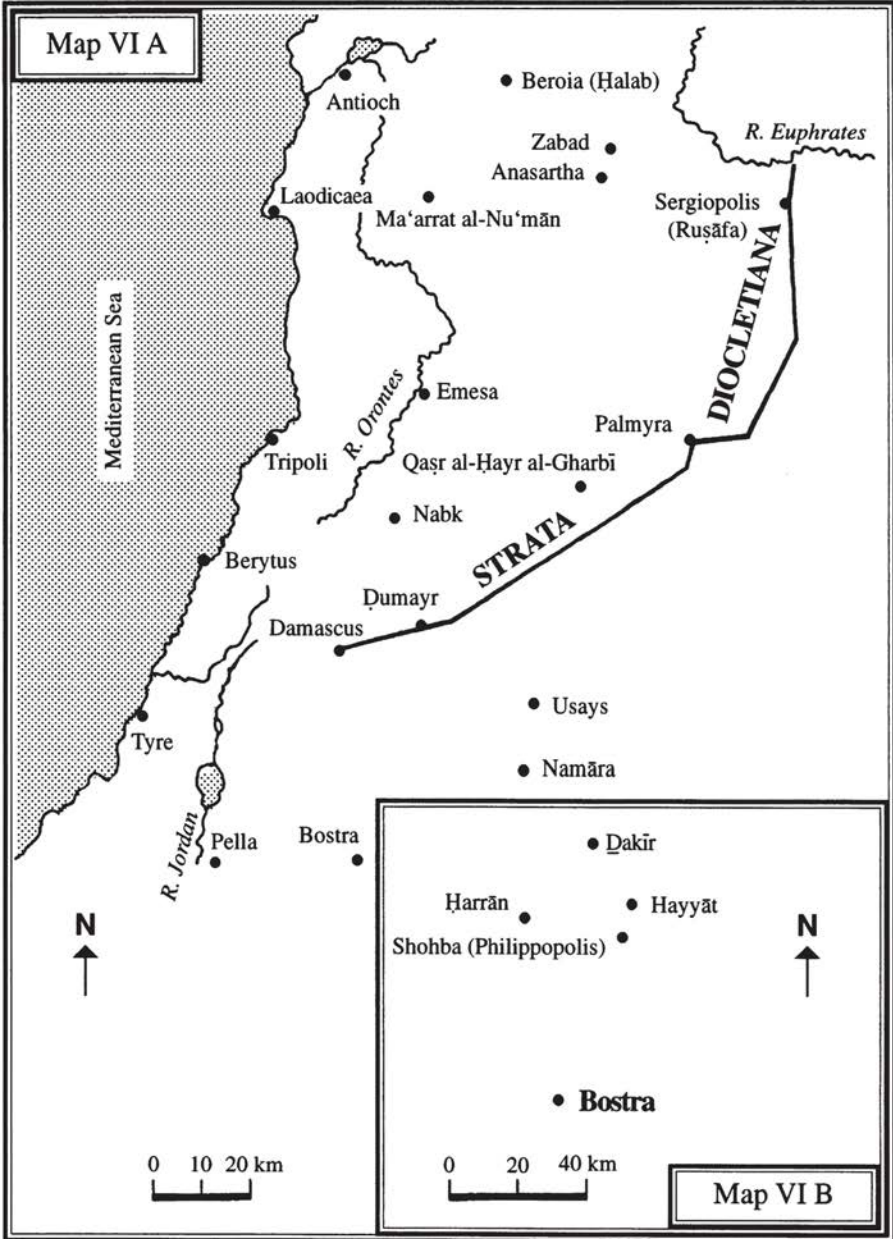
Map V shows the *Strata Diocletiana* from Damascus to Callinicum on the Euphrates. The *Strata* dispute between the Ghassānid Arethas and the Lakhmid Muḏīr provided Chosroes with a pretext for breaking the Endless Peace of 532 and starting the second Persian war of Justinian's reign. The Ghassānids had associations with some of the stations of the *Strata*, such as Ḍumayr, Palmyra, Ruṣāfa, and Callinicum, and some of their inscriptions were found on its stations, such as Ḍumayr and Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī (adapted from D. Kennedy and D. Riley, *Rome's Desert Frontier*, figure 9).



Map VI indicates the sites of what so far has been uncovered of Ghassānid and federate inscriptions; the sites are Usays, Ḍumayr, Ḍakīr, Qaşr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Ruṣāfa (Sergiopolis), and Ma'arrat al-Nu'mān. The first inscription found at Usays is Arabic while the rest are Greek.

Other sites are Zabad, where the famous Trilinguis Zabadaea was found; Pella, the site of the Greek epitaph of the two Arab Rhomaic *stratiōtai*; Ḥarrān, where the phylarch Sharāḥīl had his bilingual inscription (Greek and Arabic) engraved, commemorating the erection of a *martyrion*, dedicated to St. John the Baptist; Anasartha, where two inscriptions were found involving Arab personages, Rhomaic and federate, of the fourth and the fifth centuries; and Namāra, the site of the Arabic epitaph of the fourth-century Arab federate king Imru' al-Qays (*BAFOC*, 31–45, 222–38).

Map VI A



Map VI B

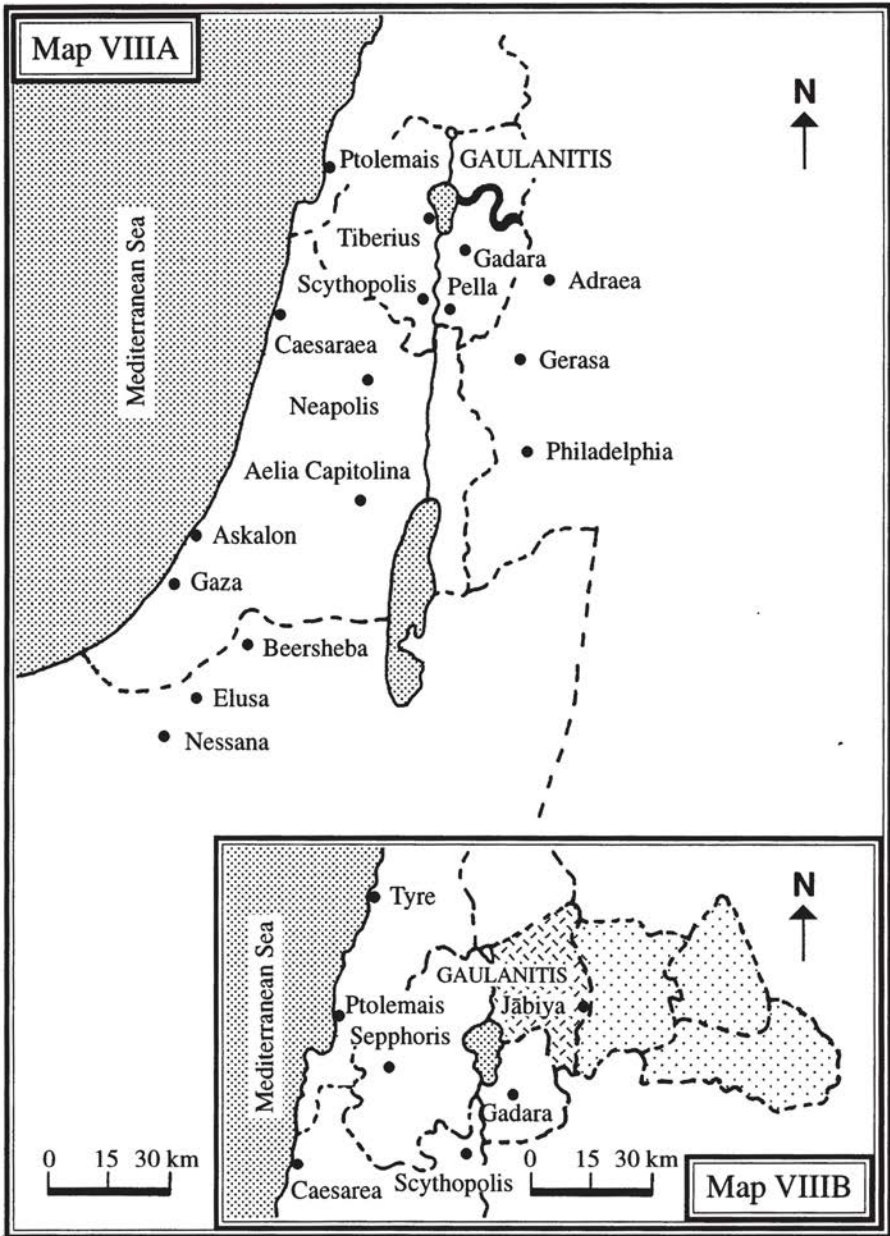


Map VII shows the Provincia Arabia, the main base of Ghassānid power in Oriens and portions of the neighboring provinces where the Ghassānids also had a strong presence. The map is most relevant to the chapter on the reign of Heraclius since it shows the sites of Ghassānid-Byzantine encounters with Islam at Mu'ta, Marj-Rāhiṭ, Adri'āt, and Jābiya and Yarmūk (adapted from W. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests*, map 2).



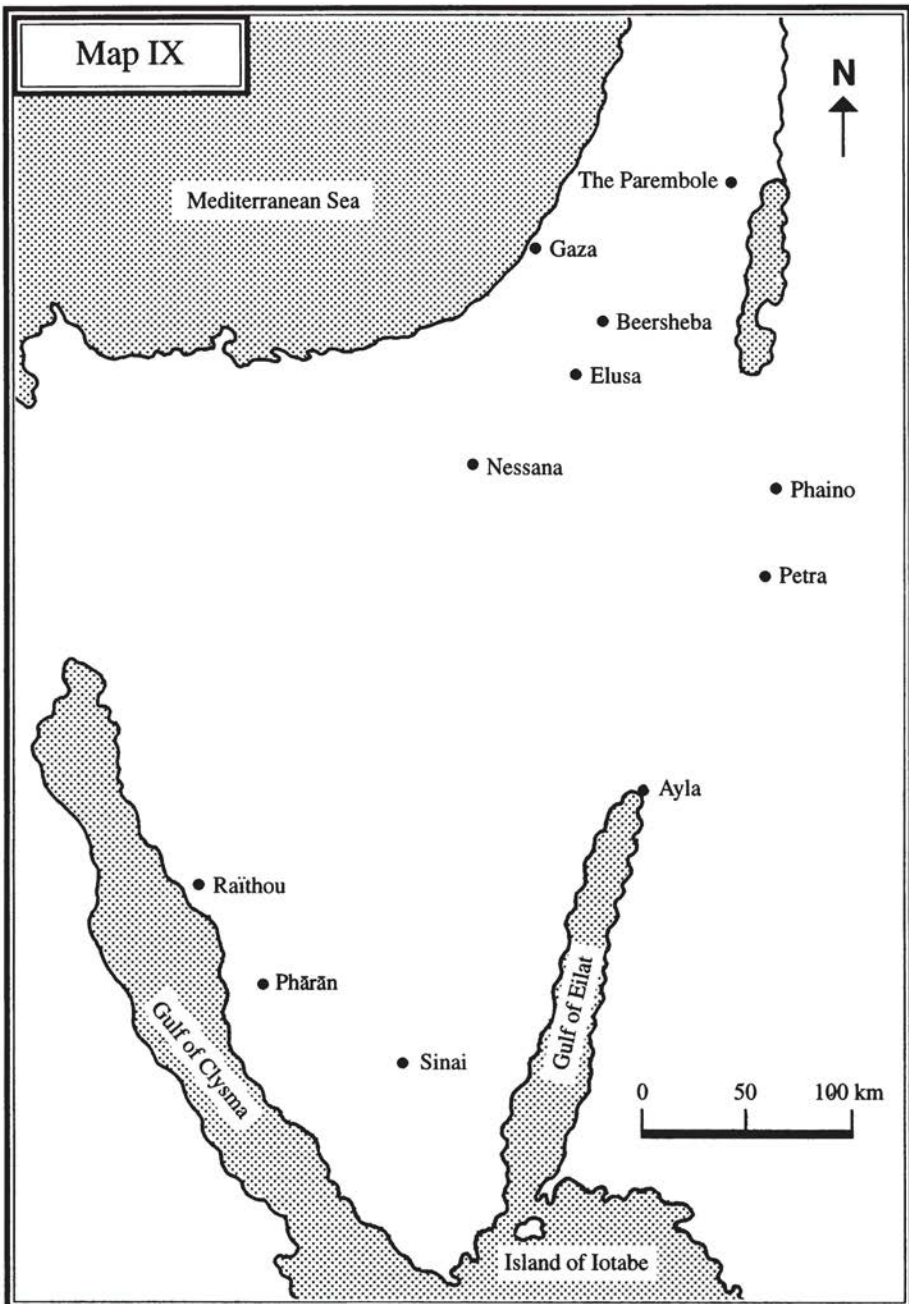
Map VIII shows the three Palestines, in which the Ghassānids had a strong presence in Palaestina II and III. Gaulanitis, where their capital, Jābiya, was located, was in Palaestina II, while Abū Karib was all-powerful in Palaestina III, appointed there as its phylarch by Justinian ca. 530. Palaestina III appears more clearly in Map IX.

The inset represents four small districts with which the Ghassānids were associated in the sources, namely, Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis, and Auranitis, in Arabic, Jawlān, Bathaniyya, al-Lajā, and Ḥawrān. The first belonged to Palaestina II, while the other three belonged to the Provincia Arabia. (This map and the inset are adapted from M. Avi-Yonah, *The Holy Land: A Historical Geography*, maps 9 and 6. The inset map illustrates these regions during the time of Herod, but their boundaries did not change much during the Byzantine period.)



Map IX is mainly the map of Palaestina III in its Sinaitic part, and the Negev together with the Desert of Juda in Palaestina I. The map shows the Parembole, the seat of the Arab phylarch Terebon II, and the vast area in Palaestina III of which the Ghassānid Abū Karib was phylarch. In addition, it shows the oasis of Phārān and Raïthou, both associated with the Arabs, Rhomaic and federate.

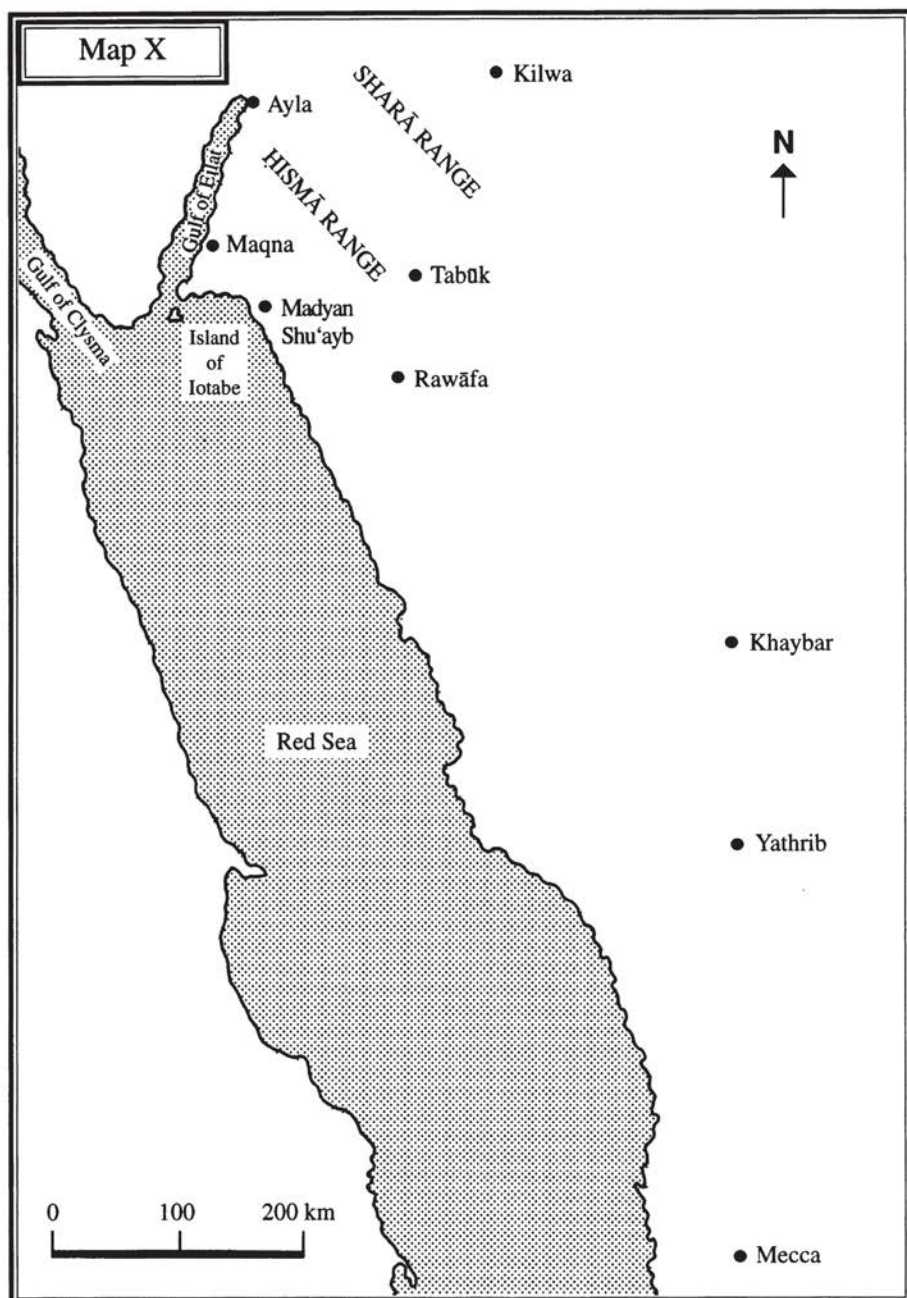
Map IX





Map X represents northwestern Arabia, roughly Ḥijāz, where, through the Ghassānids and the tribes of the Outer Shield, Byzantium had a sphere of influence. *Inter alia* the map shows Khaybar, against which the Ghassānid Arethas conducted his last campaign in 568; Tabūk, possibly identifiable with Phoinikōn, the oasis presented by the Ghassānid Abū Karib to Justinian ca. 530; and Yathrib, a Ghassānid sphere of influence through consanguinity with the two Azd tribes that inhabited it, al-Aws and al-Khazraj. Yathrib became the Medina of Islamic times.

Map X





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The *praetorium* of the Ghasṣānid king Muṇḍir, son of Arethas, erected outside the walls of Sergiopolis/Ruṣāfa, Syria (photo: courtesy Dr. Tilo Ulbert, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Damascus).











